Commentary
May 1998

Israel at Fifty

Paul Johnson
Norman Podhoretz
Jack Wertheimer
Hillel Halkin

Against an International Criminal Court
Lee A. Casey & David B. Rivkin, Jr.

Table Manners and Morals
Elizabeth Powers

Swinging With Benny Goodman
Terry Teachout

Exchanges
The Big Bang / High-Tech War / "Forgotten Communism"

Books in Review
Wilfred M. McClay • Terry Eastland • Marc Berley
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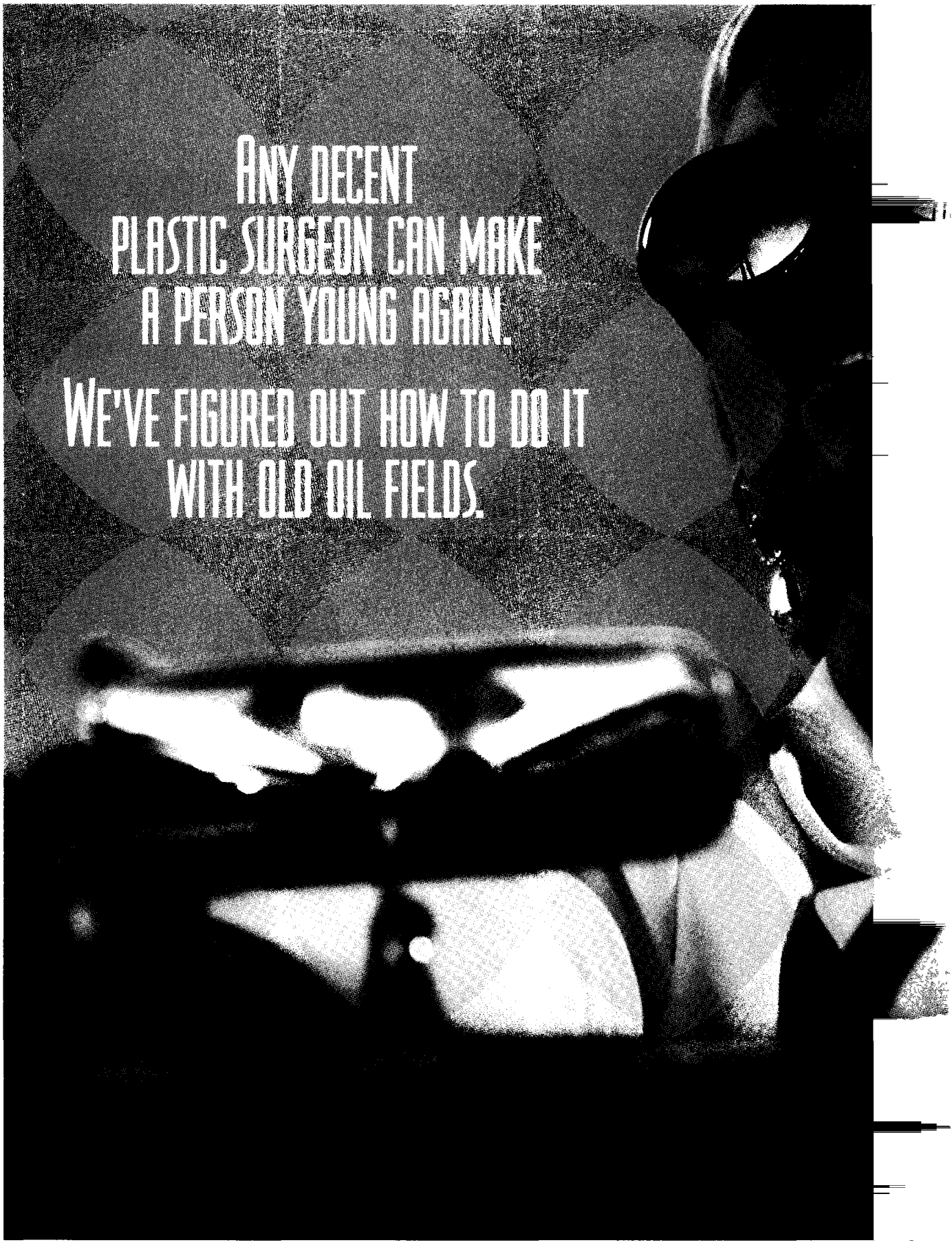

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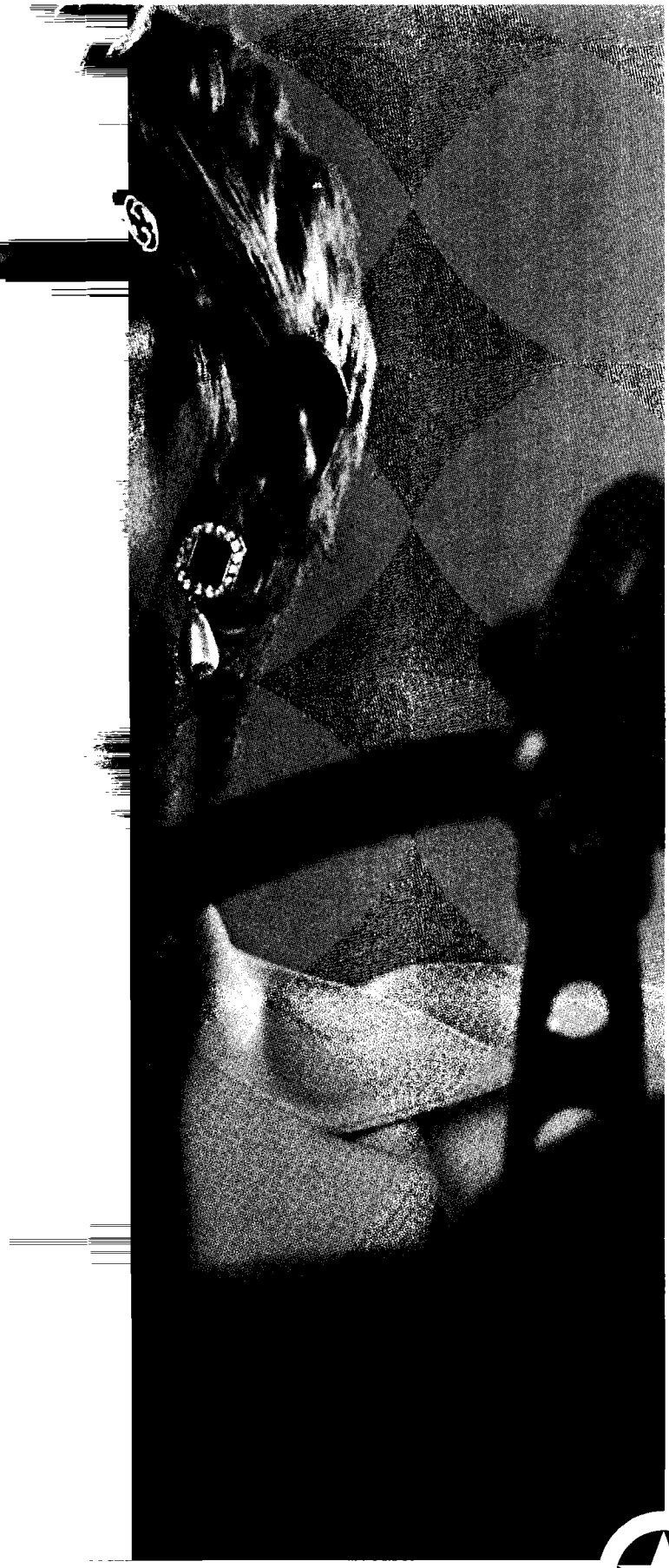

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Commentary
May 1998

Letters from Readers

The Big Bang

To the Editor:

As a working cosmologist, I enjoyed David Berlinski's poetic description of the Big Bang ["Was There a Big Bang?," February]. I also share much of his healthy skepticism about some of the more speculative extensions of the theory.

But there are several errors and omissions in his article that, separately, are innocuous enough, but, taken together, leave an impression vastly different from the one I have as an active worker in the field. For me, as for many of my colleagues, this is the golden age of cosmology. Data are flowing in at an unprecedented rate. We believe we know the answers to some very important questions, though there remain unsolved problems that may well be addressed in the coming decade. Mr. Berlinski suggests that the basis for our glee is faltering. I perceive otherwise: every pillar of modern cosmology has received new and exciting support within the last few years.

For example, Mr. Berlinski incorrectly claims that helium is the only element formed in the Big Bang; the rest, he says, "wait patiently for the stars to be born." There is one omission here and one error. The omission is that Big Bang theory predicts how much helium there should be in the universe today, a little less than 25 percent, and, in fact, this is precisely the percentage of helium that has been observed. The error is that, contrary to what Mr. Berlinski claims, other light elements are also produced in the Big Bang, albeit in much smaller quantities than helium. These abundances have also been predicted and also agree with observations. For example, in the last few years—using the Keck telescope in Hawaii—astronomers have detected deuterium in the oldest clouds ever observed. The amount of deuterium in these clouds conforms to expected levels.

My own area of research is the radiation left over from the Big Bang, and here Mr. Berlinski omits several crucial facts. First, the spectrum of this radiation has been measured with extraordinary precision. If the radiation came from the earliest moments of the universe, we would expect the spectrum to have a blackbody shape, since it should have completely thermalized—and recent measurements confirm that it has this shape to an accuracy of one part in 10,000. It is hard to conceive of any mechanism other than the Big Bang that would have produced such a precise blackbody spectrum.

Mr. Berlinski's error on this topic is even more telling. He claims that "looking at the sky in every direction, cosmologists have discovered that the cosmic background radiation (CBR) has the same temperature, to an accuracy of one part in 100,000." But in the last few years, there have been dozens of detections of deviations from this uniformity. We expect these deviations, because, as Mr. Berlinski notes, the universe today is not smooth and homogeneous. Thus, early on, the universe had to be lumpy. Our theories predict how lumpy the CBR should be, and they agree remarkably well with the new observations.

It is important to separate this part of cosmology from the more speculative part where, as Mr. Berlinski notes, "the equations of general relativity fall silent." He questions the value of any theories proposed in this latter area. To me it is hard to say that none of these will pay off in the end. Nevertheless, no matter what side one takes on the issue of pre-Big Bang speculations, it is hard to see how things could be going better for the Big Bang.

The cosmologists I know

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are not stupid and, for the most part, not arrogant. There are no young cosmologists working on the 30-year-old criticisms of Big Bang theory by Halton Arp and I.E. Segal that Mr. Berlinski cites. The reason is simple. We are attracted to the Big Bang not because we are blind sheep too ignorant to examine the evidence. Rather, we are convinced by the vast evidence that supports the basic picture. And we are excited, very excited, by the prospect of testing our theories of how structure formed in the universe with the ever-increasing data we are now receiving.

SCOTT DODELSON
NASA/Fermilab
Astrophysics Center
Batavia, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski shows serious ignorance when he says: "There are three kinds of universe to consider, and innumerably many species within each type. Those that are open and forever gushing into the void are called hyperbolic." In making this statement, Mr. Berlinski seems unaware that in the presence of a cosmological constant, the terms *open* and *closed* have two distinct usages. The terms may be used to characterize the topology, i.e., the geometric structure, of a model and simultaneously and independently the model's dynamic behavior. The term *hyperbolic* is used invariably in the former context and means a curved model of infinite spatial extent. When the terms open and closed are used to characterize the model's dynamic behavior they signify, respectively, a model that will expand forever and one that will expand to a maximum size and then contract to its original state. The possibility that the universe may be permanently static was ruled out by the British astronomer and physicist Arthur Eddington, who demonstrated that such models are unstable.

Mr. Berlinski's ignorance of these concepts is further highlighted by his statement that "the universe may be one that occupies the Euclidean space . . . balanced precariously but balanced forever between a knife's edge of expansion and contraction." But in fact there are cosmological models that are both stable and expanding.

Mr. Berlinski's discussion of the discovery of the CBR is also seriously skewed:

> It is often said . . . that the physicists Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson *observed* the remnants of the Big Bang when in 1962 they detected, by means of a hum in their equipment, a signal in the night sky they could not explain. This is not quite correct. What Penzias and Wilson *observed* was simply the same irritating and ineradicable noise that has been a feature of every electrical appliance I have ever owned. What theoreticians like Robert Dicke inferred was something else: a connection between that cackle and the cosmic background radiation released in the universe after the era of recombination.

Firstly, it was neither a hum nor a cackle that Penzias and Wilson discovered, it was a hiss. And Robert Dicke was not a theoretician but an experimentalist of considerable competence who was also knowledgeable about the theory of background radiation. Although Penzias and Wilson were at a loss to understand the hiss, Dicke immediately suggested it was the CBR. At that very time Dicke and his coworkers were setting up an experiment to look for that radiation. When Dicke learned of Penzias's and Wilson's discovery, he told his group, "We've been scooped." Finally, radiation of almost the same temperature as that discovered by Penzias and Wilson had been predicted on the basis of a Big Bang hypothesis some twenty years earlier by George Gamow, Robert Hermann, and Roger Alpher.

The steady-state hypothesis in which "nothing ever begins and nothing ever quite ends" could not accommodate the existence of the CBR and consequently was abandoned by most cosmologists. The existence of the CBR was considered decisive in determining the rejection of the Bondi-Gold-Hoyle steady-state theory in favor of the Big Bang.

Mr. Berlinski's ignorance of the relation of mathematics and physics is exemplified by his characterization of the Hawking-Penrose singularity theorems:

> Hawking and Penrose proved something [but] what they demonstrated remains within the gerbil wheel of mathematics; any additional inference requires a connection that the mathematics is not in a position to provide.

This is completely wrong; the singularity theorems provide precisely the connection between the mathematics of the physical source terms (i.e., mass and radiation) of the Einstein equations and the curved, dynamic space in which and with which they interact. The theorems imply that, traveling directly backward in time, one will encounter a point beyond which one cannot proceed. That (singular) point is approached with a simultaneous approach to infinite density of the sources. These theorems, then, though they do not prove the existence of the Big Bang, are perfectly compatible with it.

Where does the work of Halton Arp and I.E. Segal stand in all this? Arp is an observational astronomer of recognized competence, but his interpretations have failed to gain acceptance. Much of the controversy involves statistical analyses of presumed relationships between galaxies and what Arp calls "associated" quasars, i.e., quasars that he insists are very close nearby. These quasars have redshifts that, according to Hubble's law, imply that they are much farther away than the galaxies in question. Because there has yet to be found a satisfactory mechanism other than recessional motion, i.e., the Doppler effect, to explain the redshift, most cosmologists do not have Arp's confidence that these associations are real.

Segal faces an entirely different problem in gaining acceptance of his thesis. He attacks the Hubble relationship on the basis of statistical studies. Such attacks are not unique; the scientific literature contains a steady stream of them. None has survived careful examination. Much of cosmology is based on statistical studies of sets of observational data extremely difficult to obtain and more difficult to interpret. A major part of Arp's and Segal's

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work is the interpretation of these data. This is a slippery area requiring the most careful and circumspect treatment.

ALEX HARVEY
Emeritus Professor, Physics
Queens College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Almost two years ago, David Berlinski bashed Darwinian evolution ["The Deniable Darwin," June 1996] without letting us know what kind of creationism should replace it. Now he attacks cosmological evolution. Because there are grave doubts about the redshift as a measure of the receding velocity of galaxies, he concludes that there is equal doubt that the universe is expanding, and thus no sound reason to assume the universe originated in a Big Bang. Presumably the universe Mr. Berlinski prefers is static.

Please, Mr. Berlinski, do not be shy about your hidden agenda. Clear the air. What are your theological assumptions? Are you defending a Jewish or a Christian Creator—or neither, or both? We do not yet know where you stand with respect to religious faith. How about telling us?

MARTIN GARDNER
Hendersonville,
North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski is mistaken to criticize cosmologists who believe there was a Big Bang for speculating what might have caused it. While it is correct to say that science must eventually end in mystery, one never knows beforehand exactly how far science can go until it reaches its limits. Many times, what seemed beyond scientific understanding later proved to be amenable to it. And speculation is often a key first step in the scientific process.

It is, rather, creation scientists who should be criticized because they refuse to speculate about what might have caused the creation event they believe occurred, and which they dogmatically insist can never be understood.

Mr. Berlinski's concluding point is that science and myth should not be mixed. But if it is wrong for some cosmologists to go beyond scientific speculation and make a religion out of science, creation scientists are equally wrong to make a science based on myth. Mixing the two is as bad for religion as it is for science. I wish that Mr. Berlinski would take the powerful critical powers he has applied to Darwin and the Big Bang theory and turn them on creation science.

LES BRUNSWICK
DeKalb, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

What a shame that David Berlinski's intriguing deliberations are seriously marred by speculation about the concept of creation. It is not just that he regards the idea of creation as "incoherent," but that he does so on the basis of a staggeringly silly or crudely question-begging "argument" by the 3rd-century Chinese sage Kuo Hsiang. Here, as presented by Mr. Berlinski, are the putatively golden words:

> I venture to ask . . . whether the Creator is or is not. If He is not, how can he create things? And if He is, then (being one of these things) He is incapable (without self-creation) of creating the mass of bodily forms.

Mr. Berlinski then goes on to urge that the argument should not be thought wrong just because it is "simple." Of course not; elegance or simplicity is often a desirable feature of an argument. Unfortunately, however, it is of little help here. Consider: central to all versions of theism is the thesis that what is ultimately real is divine; moreover, what is divine is, *ipso facto*, perfect or unlimited in all respects. However, anything that requires creation in order to exist is, if only in that regard, metaphysically defective. Accordingly, it is axiomatic to theism that the ultimately real is *un*created, and, moreover, possesses, by virtue of its perfection, the power to create those finite things that require creation in order to exist.

While I doubt it very strongly, there may be some argument just waiting to be

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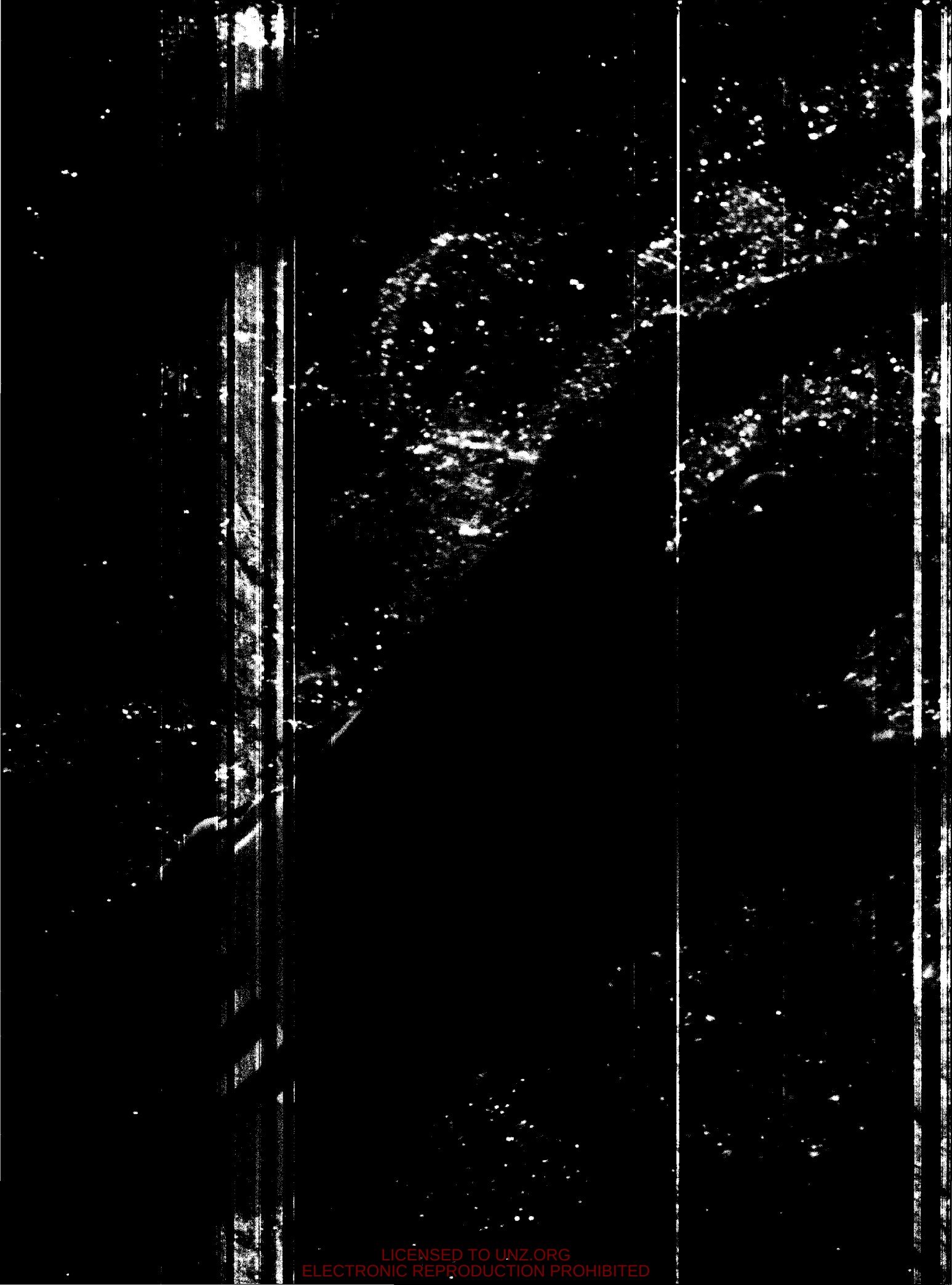

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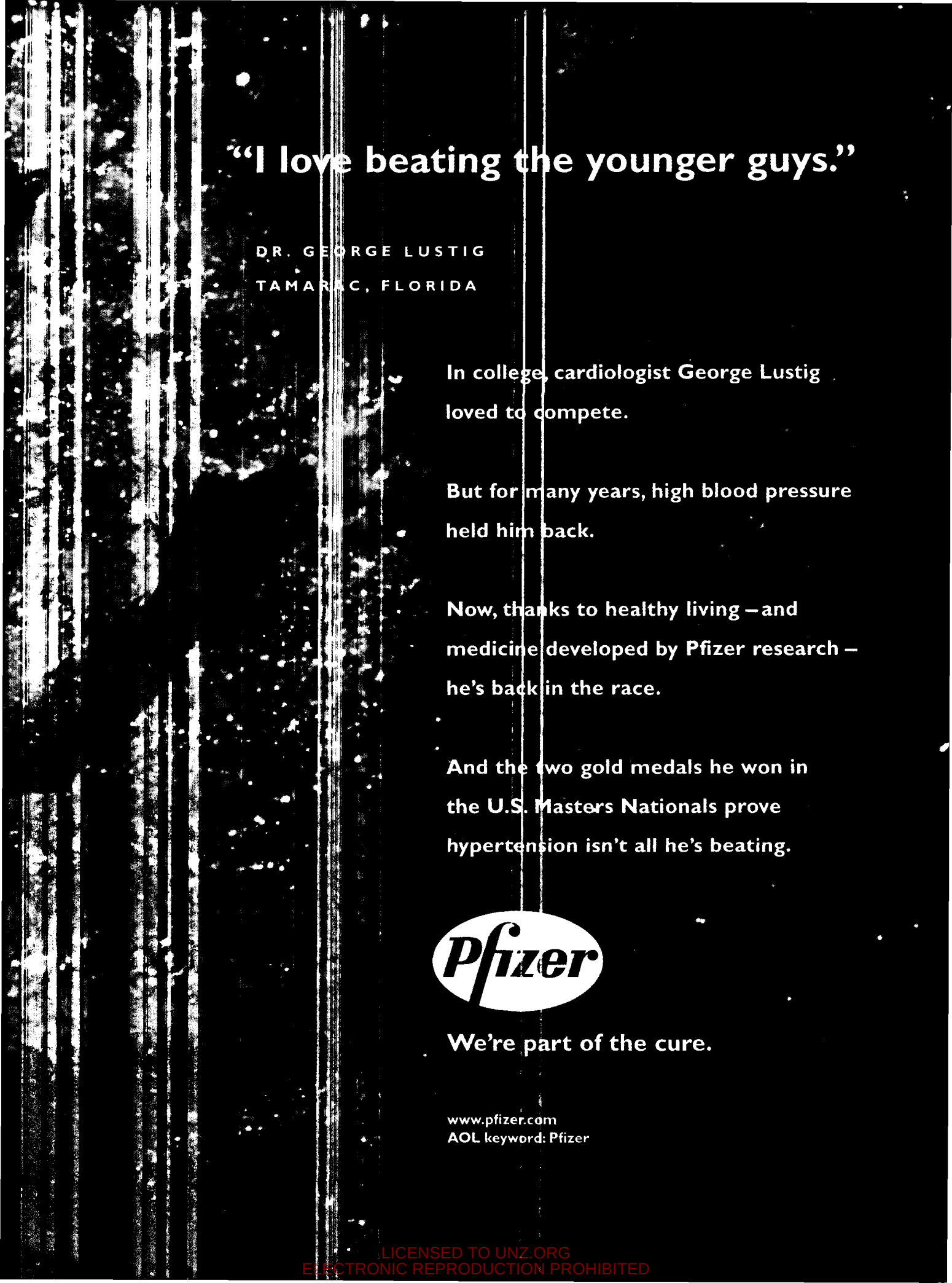
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discovered or developed that establishes that theistic views of reality are incoherent. Clearly, however, that argument is not to be found among the observations of Kuo Hsiang.

ROBERT OAKES
Saint Louis, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR:

My only reservation about David Berlinski's otherwise sharp analysis is the way he conflates ancient Hebrew cosmology with other mythical accounts of creation. His wider point, I think, is valid: that there is a fundamental distinction between mythical and scientific world views. But that does not obviate differences between Hebrew and, for example, Babylonian cosmology.

According to the biblical scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann, monotheism was part of Israel's patrimony from the outset. This means that the Bible's account of creation is fundamentally different from all others known to historians of religion. For in all other (pagan) myths, the gods are born. But the God of Israel has no pedigree and fathers no generations.

Mr. Berlinski sees a connection between Bible and Babylon here, between primordial Apsu the Begetter having sexual congress with Mummu-Tiamet (who in Babylonian myth bore the worlds as a result of this mating) and the Hebrew Creator God. For Mr. Berlinski, this shows that all myths, biblical and pagan, posit a Great Cause as the origin of universal being. Kaufmann, however, would see the emergence of the world in Babylonian myth as a natural and thus unwilled process, whereas the God of Genesis willed the universe into being, including and especially the fundamental contrasts of light and darkness, good and evil, night and day, male and female, etc. of Genesis 1.

To my mind, the charter for all theistic versions of cosmology can be found in a short essay of Thomas Aquinas entitled "On the Eternity of the World," in which he argued that while the Bible reveals that God happened to have brought the world into being at a moment in time, it is nonetheless perfectly consonant with God's power to have created the world from all eternity.

Now, in my opinion, exegesis can no longer maintain with Aquinas that Genesis reveals the beginning of the world in time, since the opening verse in Hebrew can also be translated: "At that time when God began to apportion heaven and earth, the earth was [already] formless and void." This might not be the best option for the translator, but its very possibility no longer makes it imperative to insist that the Bible reveals a beginning to the universe in time.

Ironically enough, as Mr. Berlinski points out, most popular accounts of the Big Bang leave the general public with the impression that the universe did have a kind of beginning. Hence, perhaps, the rush of theists to embrace this development, laboring as they do under two mistaken impressions, that both the Bible and Big Bang theory reveal a beginning to the universe.

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
Regis University
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

Although I am largely unschooled in the sciences, and probably have no right to form an opinion, I have nevertheless been rather skeptical of the Big Bang. My discomfort has arisen from the inclusion of a "singularity" (something not governed by the laws of physics) as one of its necessary components. The dependence of Big Bang theory on an event that science cannot explain has seemed to me, in essence, hardly different from an affirmation or belief that God created the universe, that is, more an article of faith than of fact. My skepticism, however, was tempered by the observed expansion of the universe, Hubble's law, which is, of course, suggestive of a prior powerful propulsive occurrence.

Now we are informed by David Berlinski that Hubble's law may not hold the status of even a simple ordinance. Mr. Berlinski has also pared away, with razorlike yet accessible logic, every other significant support for the Big Bang. In so doing, he has indicted what must be a large part of the scientific community for embracing or for failing to abandon that which can be regarded, in the absence of further evidence, as only the merest of conjectures.

Is this lapse on the part of those supposedly dedicated to the scientific method of small consequence because it is limited to cosmology, a subject inherently speculative, or is Mr. Berlinski implying that science and scientists in general must be given careful scrutiny? If the latter, how does the public go about that task? Perhaps a part of the answer lies with people like Mr. Berlinski who will bring to our attention what we need to know.

MARTIN T. GOLDBLUM
Beverly Hills, California

DAVID BERLINSKI writes:

I am not at all certain that Scott Dodelson and I have a substantial disagreement, but there are points that require clarification.

The golden age of cosmology? In a certain sense, this is no doubt true. Technical advances in the interpretation and analysis of cosmological data have for the first time made it possible seriously to address a number of quantitative issues that until recently have been beyond the grasp of the scientific community. If in my article I seemed to suggest otherwise, that was not my intention. The question I raised was whether Big Bang cosmology coheres theoretically and empirically in a fashion that would warrant its promotion to a governing secular myth. My conclusion was that it does not.

Mr. Dodelson argues that Big Bang cosmology not only predicts the formation of helium but places a reasonably tight quantitative bound on helium's presence in the universe, one confirmed by observation. I do not disagree, but there is a subtle distortion of emphasis in his claim. The theory of nucleosynthesis was pioneered in the 1940's by George Gamow, Roger Alpher, and Robert Hermann, who realized that with the distance between stellar objects collapsing, cosmology would sooner or later become a branch of nuclear physics. The formation of helium is thus a prediction of nuclear physics; its direct connection to Big Bang cosmology requires a further series of inferences, many of which, to my mind, are not entirely tenable.

Mr. Dodelson correctly observes that I did not dis-

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cuss the formation of other light elements, and thus gave the impression that except for helium, all others are formed in solar interiors. I accept the criticism and apologize for an incomplete formulation. But so long as we are discussing the matter, it is worth noting that the predicted quantitative bounds for other light elements are *not* entirely in accord with prevailing theories of nucleosynthesis, a fact routinely observed with some satisfaction by steady-state cosmologists.

Mr. Dodelson's most substantial comments concern cosmic background radiation (CBR). If he thinks I failed to observe its blackbody shape, he has misread me; I referred specifically to blackbody radiation in my exposition (pp. 29-30) of the standard version of hot Big Bang cosmology.

Mr. Dodelson is correct that in recent years there have been dozens of small deviations in the uniformity of observed temperature. These deviations lie at the heart of the theory of galaxy formation, and for obvious reasons: a profoundly inhomogeneous universe, such as the one we inhabit, cannot easily be derived from an entirely homogeneous background. But the deviations are also too close to the margin of experimental error for complete comfort. The fact remains that the CBR is astonishingly uniform, and this fact continues to be an *ad-hoc* assumption in standard Big Bang cosmology, one among others that various theories of inflation are meant to explain.

Mr. Dodelson is wrong in suggesting that the prediction of the CBR is a *unique* triumph of Big Bang cosmology. In this regard, he might consult I.E. Segal's paper, "Radiation in the Einstein Universe and the Cosmic Background" (*Physical Review D*, vol. 28, number 10, November 1983).

Finally, I did not say, nor did I mean to imply, that cosmologists are either stupid or arrogant. As everyone knows, they are very smart. But as in so many other areas of intellectual inquiry, cosmologists tend to move as a herd of individuals. Dissenting voices are ignored; they rarely receive funding.

In referring to "the 30-year-old criticisms of Arp and Segal," Mr. Dodelson inadvertently betrays the very instinct to which I am calling attention. Segal's criticisms are of 30 years' standing, but they are not 30 years out of date. Segal has published a continuous record of criticism; his most recent paper, dated January 3, 1998, "Cosmological Implications of a Large Complete Quasar Sample," is scheduled for publication in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (April 28, 1998). The same point holds for Halton Arp, whose criticisms are entirely contemporary. The indifference of the cosmological community to their research is shameful.

THE DISTINGUISHED cosmologist Alex Harvey has allowed his indignation to obscure his good sense.

The terms "open" and "closed" do have a meaning in point-set topology; and within general topology, one talks of open balls and the open-ball topology. The issue is utterly irrelevant. I was talking of cosmological models within the context of the solutions to the field equations of general relativity known as FL cosmology (for the work of Aleksandr Friedmann and Georges Lemaître in the 1920's); and also, as I made unmistakably clear, within a context where the cosmological constant is set to zero.

Under these conditions and the conditions of homogeneity and isotropy, there are three classes of solutions within FL cosmology, and only three. One is closed, one flat, and one hyperbolic—hyperbolic in the understood sense that the universe is roughly the four-dimensional analogue to a portion of a saddleback. The proof may be found in any well-known text on general relativity—for example, on pp. 96-105 of Robert M. Wald's *General Relativity*.

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The claim that a static universe *must* be unstable is simply not true. Arthur Eddington, in his paper, "On the Instability of Einstein's Spheroidal Worlds" (*Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. 90, 1930, pp. 668-78), made his argument with respect to a *particular* world model.

A few other matters of business. Robert Dicke is known in the physics community as a theoretician, not as an experimentalist. Here is how he is listed in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "U.S. physicist noted for his *theoretical* work in cosmology and investigations centering on the general theory of relativity" (emphasis added). And Mr. Harvey, I am quite certain, has heard of the "Brans-Dicke gravitational *theory*."

Whether Penzias and Wilson heard a noise, a hum, a cackle, or a hiss is a question that I am prepared to cede. Let us say they heard a hiss. What then?

The issue of the singularity theorems is far more complicated than Mr. Harvey is prepared to admit. As I took pains to stress in my article, cosmologists have been unable to describe the singularities of Einstein's theory in a way that is mathematically natural, plausible, elegant, and persuasive. They still cannot. Mr. Harvey is convinced that the original Hawking-Penrose theorem arose from very plausible *physical* assumptions, but this is a mistake. Theorems 1 and 2 of Stephen Hawking's and G.F. Ellis's *The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time* contain complex mathematical assumptions about the structure of a certain differential manifold. Their proofs are long, clumsy, and, as some mathematicians have maliciously suggested, perhaps fully comprehensible only to their graduate students. Still, there is no question that under a number of problematic conditions, singularities figure in general relativity. I never said otherwise.

General relativity is completely a mathematical theory, one containing a number of physical parameters. In this respect it is no different from any other theory within physics. Such theories confront the physical universe as an idealization; but very often the idealization, however plausible, is simply wrong.

The angles of a triangle in the real world sum to more or less 180 degrees. *More or less*: there are inevitable errors of measurement. In the case of local Euclidean geometry, we accept those errors as small, and move on. But the singularity theorems confront us with something entirely different: predictions that to this point have made no physical sense. Thus, Hawking and Ellis very sensibly conclude, after eliminating a number of other possibilities, that ". . . one can regard a singularity as a point where the Einstein equations (and presumably the other known laws of physics) break down." This was Einstein's conclusion, too.

Physicists cannot have it both ways. They cannot say, as does Joseph Silk, that terms like infinite density are absolutely unacceptable as physical descriptions, and then argue that general relativity predicts their physical existence. The matter is one of logic, not mathematics. If Mr. Harvey is in a position to extend the field equations so that in the context of singularities they make reasonable physical sense, I wish him well. So far, no one has done so, virtually the entire community of cosmologists agreeing with Einstein that under singular conditions, general relativity fails as a physical theory.

If the field equations (and everything else) break down within a singularity, and if the concept of an initial singularity is incoherent, as, given our present understanding, it surely is, what precisely remains of the Big Bang hypothesis other than the putative fact that the universe is expanding? To say that the conclusions of the singularity theorems are consistent with the hypothesis of the Big Bang is only to say that something we do not understand is compatible with something we cannot describe.

Mr. Harvey seriously and unfairly misrepresents the true situation with respect to Arp's and Segal's criticisms. Halton Arp was not given a respectful hearing for his heterodox views; his interpretation of quasars was subjected to statistical criticism of almost flamboyant incompetence. The facts are on record in his own very interesting book, *Quasars, Redshifts, and Commentaries*. I have carefully studied Segal's 30-year record of criticism. As I suggested in my reply to Scott Dodelson, I believe his standards of statistical and mathematical sophistication are of a different order entirely from those of his critics.

It is easy to say, because it is true, that statistical cosmological inferences are difficult to make. They are. But has it ever occurred to Alex Harvey that if so, there is reason to be very skeptical of positive statistical inferences, and very attentive to consistent, reproducible, and objective negative ones?

I AM simply baffled by Martin Gardner's insistence that I have a hidden agenda. I wrote neither of my COMMENTARY essays to advance any theological assumptions whatsoever. I swear it.

As for Les Brunswick's concern, I have not undertaken to discuss creation science because I do not know what it is and have in any case no interest or talent for theology.

Mr. Brunswick is, of course, correct in asserting that it is sheer foolishness to set limits to scientific inquiry, and correct again in urging scientists to speculate freely. Who could disagree? But physics in particular, like science in general, is also a social institution bound by particular constraints, the most notable of which is to maintain a disciplined distinction between metaphysical speculation and rigorous physical reasoning. When this distinction is blurred under conditions in which physicists say anything that pops into their heads, physics is diminished.

To turn to Robert Oakes, the argument offered by Kao Hsiang strikes me as far more subtle than it does him. In one respect, indeed, Kao Hsiang was not only correct but prescient. If the goal of a rational explanation of the universe is to provide a complete account of creation from a central set of principles, then introducing a set of principles whose own truth cannot be demonstrated from those principles means, in effect, that the complete goal of rational inquiry cannot be met. This is part of the burden of the well-known theorems of Tarski and Gödel.

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(I discuss the issue more fully in "The End of Materialist Science," *Forbes ASAP*, December 1996.) But I do not understand Mr. Oakes's assertion that ". . . anything that requires creation in order to exist is, if only in that regard, metaphysically defective." Why so?

I am glad that Edward T. Oakes agrees with me that the common interpretation of Big Bang cosmology as pointing to a universe finite in temporal origin is not coherent, philosophically or physically. But I also would not wish to be misunderstood. It is entirely possible that the physical evidence on hand will point inexorably toward a Big Bang. It is only in the light of the present depth of our theories that to think so suggests confrontation with a miracle, not a doctrine of physics. There is a difference, one that it is important to respect. Father Oakes's other, theological comments I am unable (or unwilling) to address.

Finally, Martin T. Goldblum raises an issue of profound importance within a secular culture. Although science as an institution is said to be uniquely self-critical, this is plainly true in only the most limited sense. The simple and dangerous fact is that science as an institution is largely uncritical, the more so in disciplines like evolutionary biology and cosmology that have profound social and moral implications.

Within particular scientific cultures, certain figures do command critical respect. In physics one thinks of the valuable role played recently by the late Richard Feynman; and within the larger context of 20th-century physics, Wolfgang Pauli's snort of intellectual indignation was as crucial as his very significant positive contributions to physics itself. No one on the contemporary scene is in a position to play these roles.

But what role is the public to play in the assessment of scientific structures? In the case of evolutionary biology of the sort championed by Daniel Dennett or Richard Dawkins, or evolutionary psychology of the sort popularized by Steven Pinker, the answer is obvious: criticism is within the grasp of anyone who has read ten good books. In the case of cosmology, things are different. A difficult body of mathematics stands between the skeptical amateur and the theories he is asked to evaluate. There is no help for it: the mathematics and the physics must be learned, and not everyone has the time or the taste. But what is disturbing and disheartening is that our culture has produced very few *scientific* critics of competence willing to take on the task. The problem is one of education, to be sure, but it is also a problem of taboos that have been put in place by the scientific community itself.

High-Tech War

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to comment on Alvin H. Bernstein's and Martin Libicki's contribution to the debate, "High-Tech: The Future Face of War?" [January]. Messrs. Bernstein and Libicki are technophiles who uncritically embrace the claim that emerging technologies are transforming the very nature of war. Advocates of this version of the "revolution in military affairs" (RMA) contend that these emerging technologies promise the capacity to use military force without incurring the kind of risks we faced in earlier conflicts.

The technophiles' version of the RMA is a perfect example of what Clausewitz called war on paper as opposed to war as it really is. The RMA war is fought independently of an adversary in a predictable, closed-loop environment.

But, as Clausewitz argued, "war is not the action of a living body on a lifeless mass . . . but always the collision of two living forces." Accordingly, military action

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does not produce a single, predictable reaction but a dynamic interaction, the very nature of which creates uncertainty.

Like uncertainty, friction seems to be an intractable problem intrinsic to combat. As Clausewitz observes:

> Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war. Countless minor incidents, "the kind you can never really foresee," combine to lower the general level of performance, so that one always falls far short of the intended goal.

None of these comments should be construed to mean that technology is not important, or that military revolutions have not occurred in the past or will not occur in the future. For all its immutable nature, the means of war can vary infinitely. Technological advances are often a major catalyst for revolutionary change in military affairs.

The problem with the extreme view of the RMA, however, is not the attempt to leverage technology in the pursuit of revolutionary change, but lies in technocentric thinking: the belief that an edge in technology itself is enough. Technocentric thinking can lead to a dangerous deemphasis of other factors critical to success in war, such as well-trained forces and competent leadership.

An even greater problem with technocentric thinking is the implication that information "dominance" is sufficient in and of itself for victory in future wars. The suggestion is that "seeing" things on the battlefield is all the decision-maker needs. But this misconstrues the problem by confusing data, the lowest class of information, with knowledge and, most importantly, understanding. Possessing a mass of data does not mean that the decision-maker understands its significance or what to do with it.

A danger arising from overreliance on seemingly effortless technological superiority is that those who need to make rapid decisions under conditions of uncertainty will become overconfident or slothful. The cost of either could be high on a future battlefield.

MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS
U.S. Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR:

As a retired infantry colonel, I am probably one of only a handful of your readers who has made the study of war, in theory and in practice, a lifelong profession, so I was both surprised and pleased to see your debate on the extraordinarily important role of high-tech in future combat.

There are many assumptions implicit in the arguments of high-tech advocates. The first is that most machines will work at least 95 percent of the time. They will not: generators will fail; rocket motors will fizzle; circuit boards will short out. Despite the best pre-launch checks, there will be a randomness to failures that will degrade the effectiveness of these weapons systems. The same is true of communication and sensor systems.

Then there are the human factors. Decisions still must be made. The decision window for these sophisticated systems is very small, with only a few brief moments to confer, evaluate, and decide on a course of action.

Another factor to consider is that most of the military's test sites for high-tech systems are in clear-air environments with good weather—the deserts of Nevada and California, for example, are not unlike the deserts of the Arabian peninsula. But I can tell you where the systems described by Messrs. Bernstein and Libicki will not work. They will not work in a heavy rainstorm, snowstorm, or sandstorm; they will not penetrate a triple-canopy jungle; they will not work against infantrymen in the forests of Germany; and they will have only limited value in rugged terrain like the mountains of West Virginia. Nor can they clearly distinguish between 500 sheep and an attacking infantry battalion.

I am not a Luddite. Technology can make a decisive difference. But it should be a complement to the always basic requirement of infantrymen, artillerymen, airmen, tank operators, truck drivers, and all the others who make up a modern military force. Such forces must be well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led, and in numbers large enough to sustain losses and to prevail. Bloodless wars there will not be.

JOHN B. KEELEY
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

I recently spoke with David Kay, the chief UN weapons' inspector in Iraq after the cease-fire there; he said that the main threat in the 21st century will be from low-tech not high-tech war.

In low-tech war, the manufacture and delivery of weapons of mass destruction might include one or all of the following: terrorists delivering easily-produced biological weapons (one of Kay's associates made a quantity of anthrax bacteria in a home-winemaking machine); chemical weapons (mustard gas, used in World War I, is easy to make and quite lethal); or explosives (as in Oklahoma City), striking at one of the tens of thousands of vulnerable military or civilian targets easily accessible in a free society. Kay said that even if all the weapons were destroyed, the knowledge of how to make them would remain, and a determined adversary could produce them again if it chose to do so.

Military assets, moreover, can be easily hidden. If one puts a facility 30 feet underground, for example, it cannot be seen or detected by satellite or remote reconnaissance or destroyed easily from the air.

The only way to deter a motivated terrorist state with the money and resources to make weapons is to threaten massive and unambiguous retaliation (and be willing to act upon the threat if necessary). It is the ability to do this, which is what kept us out of a world war with the Soviets for almost 50 years, that is the key.

DAVID LEVEY
Cleveland, Ohio

ALVIN H. BERNSTEIN and MARTIN LIBICKI write:

As Mackubin Thomas Owens notes, "Technological advances are often a major catalyst for revolutionary change in military affairs." Therefore, rather than joining an already sterile human-vs.-machine debate of the sort the letter-

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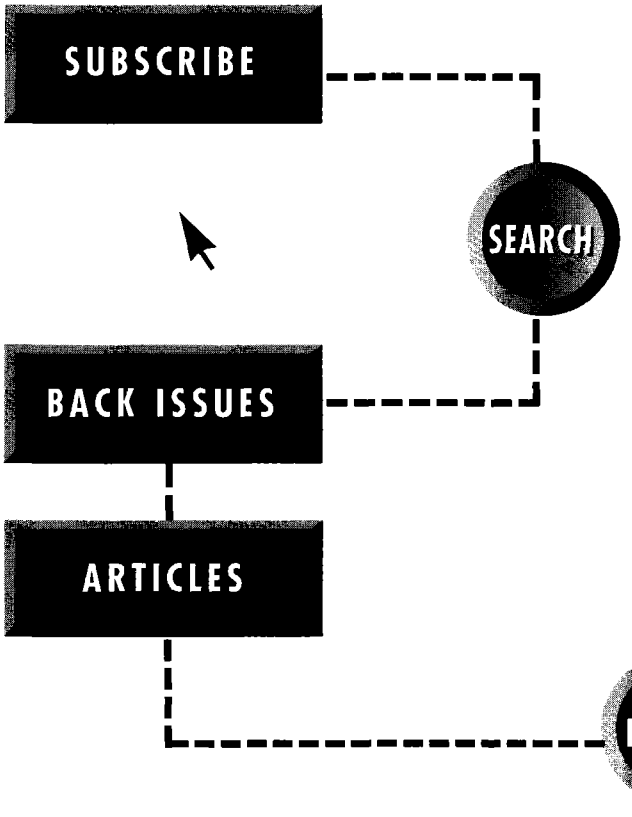

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writers appear to hanker for, we focused in our article on the challenges presented by the technological advances now sweeping the commercial and defense worlds. Of course, "well-trained forces and competent leadership" are vital, in hi-tech as in low-tech war. We never denied this, but that was not our subject.

When long-successful institutions fail, they often do so because they adapt too late to the changes that have been occurring in the world around them. By fretting about the implications of rapid technological change without committing the resources needed to cope with and profit from it, the Department of Defense risks shortening the time during which we can enjoy the security our military currently provides.

Do our correspondents really disagree that our armed forces' long suit is, as it has always been, the technological edge that derives from this country's wealth and enterprise?

"Forgotten Communism"

TO THE EDITOR:

Alain Besançon's important essay, "Forgotten Communism" [January], led me to recall a public-school teacher my wife worked with who proudly placed a bust of Lenin on his desk, and who viewed himself as an unrepentant Marxist. His only counterargument when presented with evidence of Communism's practical failure and its untold cost in human suffering was that history had not witnessed "real" Communism.

But, as Mr. Besançon makes clear, the 20th century has witnessed real Communism, just as it has witnessed real Nazism. Western intellectuals still refuse to admit, however, that Marxism in power led to horrific consequences, not because of any falling away from the theory but as a result of seeds carried within it.

I fear, though, that I do not share Mr. Besançon's guarded optimism that a full awareness of the evil of Communism may grow with time. Nevertheless, this is a brave article. Kudos to COMMENTARY for being daring—and imaginative—enough to see it into print.

BRIAN C. ANDERSON
City Journal
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for the signal service COMMENTARY has rendered in publishing Alain Besançon's magisterial "Forgotten Communism." If I may presume, however, I would like to add to Mr. Besançon's comparison of Soviet Communism and Nazism.

Let me begin by citing the historic "Declaration of Repentance" read by Bishop Olivier de Berranger last October, in which he and his confrères acknowledged that the Catholic Church in France, owing to the "silence" of "too many" of its pastors in the face of Nazi persecution of the Jews, "failed in her mission as teacher of consciences" during the Holocaust. The bishops admitted that centuries of Christian-Jewish animosity helped create a climate of opinion in which the brand of anti-Semitism preached by the Nazis could take root and flourish.

Turning now to that other great evil, Soviet Communism, one finds nothing even remotely paralleling the French Catholic episcopate's public *mea culpa*. And yet in this instance there is all the more reason to seek such an admission from a host of religious figures and institutions of all denominations that share a responsibility—along with the Western political and cultural elites excoriated by Mr. Besançon—not only for their silence regarding the crimes of Soviet Communism and its minions, but also for their active endorsement of those dark deeds.

The anecdotal evidence for such a judgment is legion, running the gamut from theoretical infatuation with the Communist heresy by armchair theologians to active support for Soviet-inspired actions regardless of the consequences. The hallmark of the present century has been the evil wrought by totalitarianism, but when any history of the period is written, it must also record the monumental shame of those who should have known about this evil but remained silent.

REV. JOHN-PETER PHAM
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty
Champaign, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with great interest and heartfelt approval Alain Besançon's "Forgotten Communism," all the more so because I have published two articles, one in *National Review* ("Soviet Terror, American Amnesia," May 2, 1994), the other in *Partisan Review* ("Comparative Moral Reassessments of Nazism and Communism," Fall 1995), that took up this same theme and reached similar conclusions.

My *National Review* article began:

> It has been customary in our times to make reference to the Holocaust whenever we wish to allude to some unrivaled evil. . . . [W]ords like "Nazi," "Auschwitz," "Storm Troopers," and "Gestapo" are reflexively appended to political or social phenomena one wishes to discredit conclusively.

By contrast, I observed:

> Words like "Soviet," "Soviet Communist," "Kolyma," or "KGB" are rarely used to discredit political movements and practices. It is doubtful that one in a thousand Americans . . . would recognize the name of a single Soviet concentration camp.

Among the factors accounting for the different responses to Nazism and Communism, I mentioned, as does Mr. Besançon, the relative paucity of photographic evidence in the Communist case. Like him, I also argued that the anti-Nazi alliance in World War II contributed to the tendency to ignore or deny Soviet atrocities; and I too addressed (and traced chronologically) the long record of evasion and the reluctance of those on the Left to acknowledge the moral comparability of the two evils, notwithstanding the uniqueness of the highly mechanized Nazi way of carrying out mass murder.

While it would have been pleasing to have some reference to my writings on the subject, I assume that Mr. Besançon is not a regular reader of the American publications where my articles appeared.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Northampton, Massachusetts

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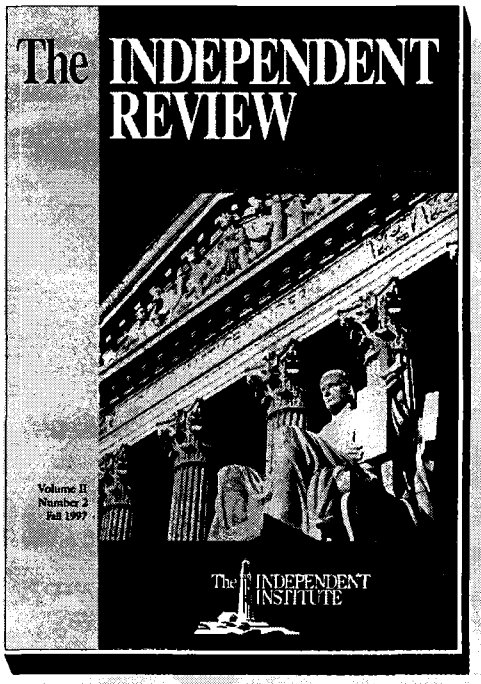

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TO THE EDITOR:

Alain Besançon's claim that the crimes of Communism have been forgotten is only partly true. People in the former Soviet satellites wanted to deal with the Communists in the same way the Nazis had been dealt with. But political activists, both Communist and non-Communist, tried in every way to dodge the issue. In my country, for example, the rank and file of the opposition political party harshly criticized their leaders and pressed them to launch a serious effort at de-Communization, but nothing was done. Why? In all the Soviet-bloc countries, the enormous secret-service apparatus was an essential part of the government. When we come to know how many non-Communist politicians were collaborators, we will find it much easier to understand why such people have not been eager to address the key issue of Communist crimes.

And why did not Western governments push East European countries to do something about the problem? I would guess that Western governments realized, quite correctly, that the transition was controlled by members of the former Communist establishment. To push them too hard at the beginning would have put the entire process at risk.

The reason, then, that Nazism and Communism received such unequal treatment is quite simple: Nazism was toppled from power. Nothing similar happened to the Communists. Communist elites, though they now operate under different labels, are still very powerful everywhere in the post-Communist world. Because they remain so influential, it has not been feasible to bring them to justice and eliminate them from public life. This is what makes Mr. Besançon's article so important—its relevance to the present situation in Eastern Europe.

VESSELIN PETKOV
Sofia, Bulgaria

TO THE EDITOR:

It is indeed a mystery why the crimes committed by Communist regimes in Russia and in its "fraternal republics" in Eastern Europe against their own people remain unaddressed and unpunished.

Perhaps, as Alain Besançon suggests, this is partly explained by memories of the Soviet Union as an ally against the evils of Nazism, or by the West's mistaken notions of the harmlessness of the "left" side of the political spectrum. "Enlightened" liberal opinion had a lot to do with conditioning this response.

Equally confounding is the reaction of the citizens of the former Soviet Union or of the states of the former Soviet bloc to their recent past. Particularly telling is the reception given Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn upon his return to his homeland. History's most prominent witness and chronicler of the horrors of the gulag was met with indifference, if not resentment.

In the summer of 1993, I crossed the former "Fatherland of the Workers," traveling from Kiev to Khabarovsk, situated on the Amur River border with China. During the six weeks I spent in the crumbling Soviet empire, I did not encounter one anti-Communist. Most of those with whom I talked had suffered horribly, during and after the Stalin era, a condition shared by millions of their countrymen. Yet everyday concerns with the uncertainties of their daily lives made them incapable of focusing on the crimes committed against them or against their families during their own lifetime. There appeared to be no desire to hold anyone or even any political idea responsible for the nightmare that enveloped Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. It was quite surreal. Whether the time for reckoning will ever come is a matter of speculation.

My late father, whose youthful devotion to the cause of human liberation was repaid with imprisonment in the notorious Soviet prison camp of Vorkuta, wrote in his hour of deep despair: "Perhaps, some day, those responsible will be held to account."

My poor father, perhaps not.

NATHAN SHUSTER
North York, Ontario
Canada

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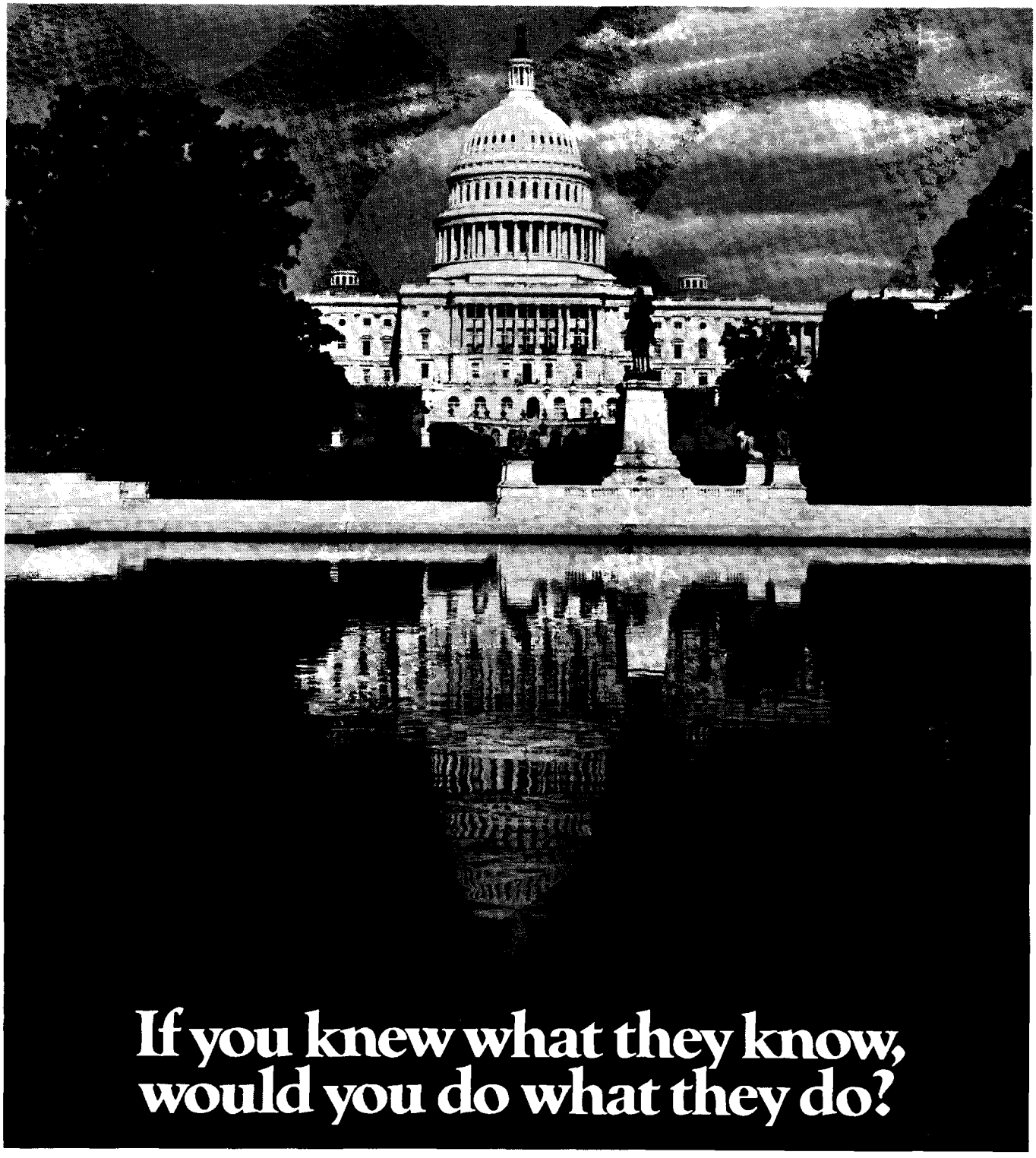

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Commentary
May 1998

The Miracle

Paul Johnson

THE STATE of Israel is the product of more than 4,000 years of Jewish history. "If you want to understand our country, read this!" said David Ben-Gurion on the first occasion I met him, in 1957. And he slapped the Bible. But the creation and survival of Israel are also very much a 20th-century phenomenon, one that could not have happened without the violence and cruelty, the agonies, confusions, and cross-currents of our tragic age. It could even be argued that Israel is the most characteristic single product, and its creation the quintessential event, of this century.

Certainly, you cannot study Israel without traveling the historical highroads and many of the byroads of the times, beginning with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. That great watershed between an age of peace and moderation and one of violence and extremism set the pattern for all that followed, and marked a turning point as well in the fortunes of Zionism.

Theodor Herzl's Zion, a product of the 1890's, was not exactly a modest proposal, but it could fairly be described as a moderate one. His book was entitled *Der Judenstaat*, and that phrase—a "state of the Jews"—fairly describes what he had in mind. But he was not necessarily wedded to the historical dream of a state in Palestine. He toyed, for example, with the notion of a giant settlement in Argentina, and not until the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905 was Uganda, too, finally rejected as a possible site. By that time Herzl was dead, at the age of forty-four. One of his last pronouncements had been: "Palestine is the only land where our people can come to rest."

Uncertainties and ambivalences of other kinds abounded. Although Herzl had always used the word "sovereignty" in connection with his imagined Jewish state, his friend Max Nordau, the philosopher, believed that in order to avoid offending the Turks, of whose empire Palestine then formed a part, the term *Judenstaat* should be replaced by *Heimstätte*, or homestead, rendered into English as "national home." This fortuitously became an important factor in winning acceptance for the Zionist idea among European statesmen. Similarly, Herzl had written of a huge "expedition" that would "take possession of the land," but the idea that the land would actually have to be conquered, and then fiercely defended, does not seem to have occurred to him.

As for the arrangements of life in his future commonwealth, Herzl was enamored of the model of Venice at the height of its power. He imagined a Venetian-style constitution, a Jewish *doge*, a coronation ceremony, and city plans featuring huge

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squares like the Piazza San Marco. He also foresaw theaters, circuses, café-concerts, and an enormous opera house specializing in Wagner, his favorite. The only military touch was to be a guards regiment, the Herzl-Cuirassiers, for ceremonial occasions; the New Zion would not, he thought, need much of an army. In many ways, Herzl's conception had more in common with the Ruritania of Anthony Hope's novels than with the state that actually came into being a little over four decades after his death.

WORLD WAR I had a double effect on Zionism, transforming its program from a theoretical into a real possibility but also ensuring that the creation of the Jewish state would be bloody. Until 1914, the men who ran the British empire, though sympathetic to Zionism, were inclined to fob off Jewish leaders with schemes for developing a slice of Africa. Turkey was a traditional British ally, and keeping its ramshackle possessions together was a prime object of British policy. What put an end to all that was the fateful decision of the Turks to join the side of Germany in the war. In a dramatic speech in November 1914, the British Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith, announced: "The Turkish empire has committed suicide."

Immediately, a Palestinian Zion became conceivable, and what would be known as the Balfour Declaration was in train. But the British decision to end the Turkish empire in the Middle East also presupposed the existence of new *Arab* states as well, and inevitably brought into being Arab nationalism. It is here that Herzl's initiative and dynamism proved to be so crucial. Timing is all-important in history. No doubt a Zionist political movement would in due course have come into existence without Herzl. By launching it in the 1890's, Herzl gave the Jews, in effect, a twenty-year headstart over the Arabs. Even before the war began, Zionist leaders had been in touch with leading British policy-makers, and they exploited the possibilities produced by the war with great energy and sophistication.

It is amazing, in retrospect, that the Zionists were able to secure the Balfour Declaration—ensuring the "best endeavors" of the British government to achieve "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people"—in 1917, while the war was still undecided, thus preempting the postwar negotiations and settlements of national claims. By the time the Arabs got themselves organized as an international pressure group, at the Versailles Peace Conference, it was too late. They did win their Arab states, but the Jews had already gained their national home and were settling it with all deliberate speed.

But World War I also introduced unprecedented degrees of violence and extremism into the world, and these too held consequences for the future of Israel. Gone was any possibility that the Jewish national home might integrate itself peacefully with its Arab neighbors, paying for its presence in their midst by teaching them the modern arts of agriculture and commerce. The so-called Arab Revolt that began in 1936 and that was encouraged and rewarded by the British mandatory power confirmed local Arab leaders in the view that their most promising option against the Zionists was force. What had driven out the Turks and created the new Arab states could also be employed, in due course, to extirpate the Jews. This became a fixed Arab notion, so that in time, both within Palestine and across the Middle East as a whole, Arab leaders, faced with the choice of negotiation or war would invariably choose war—and invariably lose.

The violence bred by the searing years 1914-18 also decisively changed the moral climate of Europe, again with fateful results for the future Jewish state. In the wake of the war, extremist regimes seized power and ruled by force and terror—first in Russia, then in Italy, and finally in Germany. The transformation of Germany from the best-educated society in Europe into a totalitarian race-state was, of course, determinative. Although the anti-Semites of Central Europe had always treated Jews with varying degrees of cruelty and injustice, up to and including murderous pogroms and expulsion, it was only with Hitler that actual extermination became a possible program. The outbreak of World War II provided the covering darkness to make it not just possible but practical.

The Holocaust destroyed by far the greater proportion of European Jews, the pool from which Zionism had drawn both recruits and moral fervor. But it also united much of the rest of world Jewry behind the Zionist project, and brought into existence the American Jewish lobby, the prototype of all the great lobbies of the later 20th century. In the perspective of the Holocaust, moreover, it became clear that Zion had to be not merely a "national home" but a refuge, and a fortress. Finally, the Holocaust spurred the Palestinian Jews (and the refugees who joined them) to create the military means to defend the citadel. If World War I created the new Zion, it was World War II that made possible the Israeli army.

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In the last half-century, over 100 completely new independent states have come into existence. Israel is the only one whose creation can fairly be called a miracle.

I observed the drama of 1948-49 from the security of an ancient Oxford college, where I was an undergraduate. Academic opinion was then, on balance, favorable to the new Zion: many dons had been brought up in the philo-Semitic tradition of *Daniel Deronda* (1876), George Eliot's novel about a young man who discovers his identity as a Jew and dedicates himself to the Zionist cause, and they welcomed Israel as an intellectual and moral artifact. But opinion was also virtually unanimous that the state would be crushed. That was assuredly the view of most governments and military staffs: the notion of the Jew as a soldier had not yet captured the Western imagination.

In 1948, the Haganah, Israel's defense force, had 21,000 men, as against a professional Arab invading army of 10,000 Egyptians, 4,500 in Jordan's Arab Legion, 7,000 Syrians, 3,000 Iraqis, and 3,000 Lebanese—plus the "Arab Liberation Army" of Palestinians. In equipment, including armor and air power, the odds were similarly heavy against Israel. Revisionist historians (including Israeli ones) now portray the War of Independence as a deliberate Zionist land grab, involving the use of terrorism to panic Arabs into quitting their farms and homes. They ignore the central fact that the Zionist leaders did not want war but rather feared it as a risk to be taken only if there was absolutely no alternative. That is why in 1947 the Zionist leadership had accepted the United Nations partition scheme, which would have given the nascent state only 5,500 square miles, chiefly in the Negev desert, and would have created an impossible entity of 538,000 Jews and 397,000 Arabs. Arab rejection of this scheme was an act of supreme folly.

Of course the Jews fought heroically, and performed prodigies of improvisation: they had to—it was either that or extermination. No doubt they fought savagely, too, on occasion, and committed acts that might appear to lend some coloring to the revisionist case. But as a whole that case is historically false. It was the Arab leadership, by its obduracy and its ready resort to force, that was responsible for the somewhat enlarged Israel that emerged after the 1949 armistice, and the same mind-set would create the more greatly enlarged Israel that emerged after the Six-Day War of 1967. In another of the paradoxes of history, the frontiers of the state, as they exist today, were as much the doing of the Arabs as of the Jews. If it had been left to the UN, tiny Zion probably could not have survived.

Another paradoxical aspect of the Zionist miracle, which we certainly did not grasp at the time and which is insufficiently understood even now, is that among the founding fathers of Israel was Joseph Stalin. Stalin had no love for Jews; quite the contrary, he murdered them whenever it suited his purposes. In his last phase, indeed, he was becoming increasingly paranoid; had he lived, he might well have carried out an extermination program rivaling Hitler's. Moreover, like Lenin before him, Stalin had always opposed Zionism. He did so not only as a Great Russian imperialist but as a Marxist, and he was consistent on the matter up to the end of World War II and again from 1950 to his death in 1953. But during the crucial years 1947-48, he was guided by temporary considerations of *Realpolitik*, and specifically by what he saw as the threat of British imperialism.

Stalin ignorantly supposed that the way to undermine Britain's position in the Middle East was to support the Jews, not the Arabs, and he backed Zionism in order to break the "British stranglehold." Not only did he extend diplomatic recognition to Israel but, in order to intensify the fighting and the consequent chaos, he instructed the Czech government to sell it arms. The Czechs turned over an entire military airfield to shuttle weaponry to Tel Aviv; the Messerschmitt aircraft they supplied were of particular importance. Then, in mid-August 1948, Stalin decided he had made a huge error in judgment, and the obedient Czech government ordered a halt to the airlift within 48 hours. But by then the war had effectively been won.

The fledgling Israeli state was equally fortunate when it came to America, benefiting from a phase of benevolence that once again might not have lasted. President Truman was pro-Zionist, and he needed the Jewish vote in the 1948 election. It was his decision to push the partition scheme through the UN in November 1947 and to recognize the new Israeli state (*de facto*, not *de jure*) when it was declared in May 1948. But the contrary pressure he had to face, both from the State Department under George C. Marshall and from his Defense Secretary, James V. Forrestal, was immense. If the crisis had come a year later, after the cold war started to dominate the thinking of the West to the exclusion of almost everything else, it is likely that the anti-Zionist forces would have proved too strong for Truman. As it was, American backing for Israel in

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1947-48 was the last idealistic luxury the Americans permitted themselves before the realities of global confrontation descended.

Thus, in terms both of Soviet and of American policy, Israel slipped into existence through a window that briefly opened, and just as suddenly closed. Once again, timing—or, if one likes, providence—was of the essence.

IF IT took a half-century to transform Zionism from an idea into a reality, the reality is itself now a half-century old. Both 50-year periods illustrate the extraordinary interplay, so fascinating to a historian, between the force of ideas and the accidents of time and chance.

Herzl's Zion was seen, by him at any rate, in terms of a visual drama. His great love was show business; he boasted that "the next Exodus to the Promised Land" would outshine "that of Moses," just as a "Wagnerian opera" outshone a "Shrove Tuesday play." He opened the Second Zionist Congress in 1898 with the overture from *Tannhäuser*; insisted that delegates wear full evening dress with white tie at formal sessions; and imposed luxurious sumptuary regulations, based on the highest Western standards. The *Judenstaat* was to be a grand affair, as far from ghetto and gabardine as possible.

That was the one image: Zion as a glittering renaissance, a new City of David, painted in the strongest of colors. But there were two competing images. First there was the vision of the pious Jew, for whom Zion was a *religious* event, and the creation of a materialistic national home, let alone of a sovereign secular state, was an irrelevancy at best. Such Jews returned to Palestine, and then Israel, to pray and observe religious law and to encourage (and, where possible, compel) others to do likewise. They were there before modern Zionism got under way and they are still there, in much greater numbers, offering an alternative vision and wielding with persistence such political power as they can secure.

Then there was the vision of the actual pioneers who came to redeem and work the land and make the waste places bloom, whether as independent farmers or, more usually, as members of a kibbutz or a cooperative. They were colonists but also, for the most part, democrats, egalitarians, and socialists. It would be hard to say whether their image of Zion was farther removed from Herzl's Venetian-style oligarchy or from the religious Zion of the pious. Literally and figuratively they rejected both gabardine and white-tie-and-tails, settling for open-necked shirts unadorned by starch or tie.

Though little else in the three visions was realized, the open-necked shirt did become the uniform of Israeli politicians during the state's formative period. And in another respect, too, the colonizing founder-farmers left an imprint on the new state and society that so far has proved almost ineffaceable.

These Ashkenazi Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe, were colonists despite themselves. They were taking up land that had not been farmed before, or had been poorly farmed, in exactly the same way as many of their non-Jewish contemporaries who were settling in Rhodesia, or Kenya, or Argentina, or the Maghreb. But they also wanted to differentiate themselves from those foot soldiers of the colonial empires, as well as from the whole structure of capitalist accumulation. So, partly out of intention, partly out of necessity, and partly under the influence of the Tolstoyan communitarian spirit of Russia, whence many of the most active leaders came, first the national home and then Israel itself grew up under what would later be called a "mixed economy," in which the public sector was the determining ingredient.

The small but complex state whose foundation David Ben-Gurion superintended contained many entrepreneurial elements. But these elements were usually held in the hands of the state or other collectivist institutions like the trade unions, which owned property on a huge scale. For purposes of defense, indeed of sheer survival, Israel had to have a "military-industrial complex" (to use the later formulation of President Dwight D. Eisenhower). This too was a publicly owned network, and the imperative needs of defense took priority over the market at every point. In a sense, embattled Israel had, and had to have, a command economy, one in which government gave most of the orders and the private sector and the enterprising spirit struggled against wartime levels of taxation and a forbidding density of regulations. No one got rich, legally at least. Businessmen crouched low in the social pecking order.

Was David Ben-Gurion himself a socialist? He was undoubtedly an idealist of sorts. He was also a master of *Realpolitik*, and an improviser of genius. He radiated strength, energy, passion, and an intelligence that oscillated disconcertingly from subtlety to brute power. His Zionism, though unblushingly secular in theory, had quasi-religious or at any rate metaphysical overtones. He spanned biblical categories—now the prophet inspired, now King David—and he was protean, switching from one role to the next as occasion required. In short, he

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was an original. But he certainly thought of himself as a socialist.

Was his Israel socialist? Revisionist historians ruefully deny the claim, portraying the country instead as a pseudo-socialist enterprise in which the overriding demands of nationalism took precedence over humanitarian values.* That, however, was certainly not the way people on the Left, including me at the time, thought of the matter.

Let us get our categories clear here. In the 1950's, it was already horrifyingly apparent that the "Socialist Sixth of the World" under Soviet domination was a murderous caricature, incapable of producing prosperity, justice, or security. As for the social-democratic welfare states of Europe, these were tame and feeble affairs and, to the sharp-eyed, already moribund. But Israel seemed somehow different. To visit the country was to get not just a whiff but huge lungsful of realized socialism at its best—and at its most exhausting. (Kingsley Martin, my old editor at the left-wing *New Statesman*, used to say: "Israel is the only country in the world where every official, from highest to lowest, seems to be an intellectual, and you can debate with them half the night.")

Nevertheless, the revisionists do have a kind of point, if not the one they intend. The fact that many of the Zionist settlers in the early 20th century called themselves socialists obscures the fundamental antagonism between Zionism and socialism, whether it be socialism of the internationalist variety, which always saw the Zionists as traitors to the ideals of working-class solidarity, or socialism of the national kind, which was usually anti-Semitic anyway. Most of the anti-Semitic parties that began to form in Central Europe starting in the late 1870's had the word "socialist" in their title. Wilhelm Marr, who coined the term "anti-Semitism," was a socialist-anarchist, and the Christian Socialist Workers party was the first to adopt an openly anti-Semitic platform. Karl Lueger, the notorious anti-Semitic mayor of Vienna, called himself a socialist. In turning the German Workers party into an anti-Semitic organization, Hitler was thus in a tradition already nearly half a century old.

If, then, the founding fathers of Israel did diverge from the path of socialist priorities into the path of Jewish national ones, as the revisionists accuse them of having done, it is to their everlasting credit.

WHATEVER HYBRID political form the young state took, one thing it was not and could not be was a light unto its closest neighbors. The 1948-49 war ended not in peace but in an armistice, followed over the ensuing decades by a desperate arms race, Arab economic boycott, horrific acts of violence, and outright war. Although the returning Jews came eager to teach the arts of peace, they repeatedly had to confront their neighbors instead on the fields of battle, and constantly had to hone their military skills to stay ahead.

This is not to say that the old dream of reconciliation fell by the wayside. Some Israeli public figures, indeed, became fond of arguing that Arab hatred of Israel was a case of mistaken identity: the Arabs wrongly saw the Jewish state as a colonizing power, a foothold of Western imperialism, or a 20th-century version of the medieval Crusader kingdom. To correct this unfortunate image, Israel would have to "go native," becoming a genuine Middle Eastern state with the geopolitical priorities and instincts of its neighbors. It would have to adopt a low profile, and a local one.

Despite the manifest utopianism of this idea, the ruling Labor coalition flirted with a policy based on it for many years. The idea was impractical for a number of reasons. In the first place, Israel could not dispense with its military and financial umbilical cord to the United States, the *fons et origo* of "Western imperialism." Second, Israel was not, and could not become, a Middle Eastern state like other Middle Eastern states, nor could its people successfully pretend to be (as it were) Jewish Arabs.

An irony here is that there were indeed plenty of Jewish Middle Easterners in Israel: the (misnamed) Sephardim who flocked there in fear and poverty after being driven out of the Arab world. But these arrivals, far from leavening the Western-formed majority with a local yeast, pushed in the opposite direction. Having suffered at Arab hands, they had none of the dreamy good will of some Ashkenazi founders and their successors. To the contrary, the Sephardim saw Arab and Israeli interests as clearly distinct, and clearly incompatible. Having come to Israel precisely because it was *not* a Middle Eastern state like the rest, they sought to keep it that way.

In due course, these Jewish Middle Easterners played a crucial role in Israeli politics, decisively helping to bring about the fall of Labor and the end of the first phase of Israel's existence: the phase of socialist ideals and illusions, of high hopes deferred and grand visions unrealized. Now, starting

*See, for instance, Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton, 419 pp., $29.95).

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in 1977, came the second phase—the phase of resigned realism—which, two decades later, is still with us.

AFTER MANY dogged years as the leader of the parliamentary opposition, Menachem Begin came to power in 1977 at the head of the victorious Likud coalition. Begin was not as important in Israel's history as Ben-Gurion, but he ran a close second, and the two granitic men had much in common. Both of them were stiff-necked, opinionated, obstinate, and, so far as I could see, totally lacking in fear. But Begin, who spent the early years of World War II in Eastern Europe, was also bitter in a way that Ben-Gurion was not. He had good reason: in 1939, his home town, Brest-Litovsk, had contained over 30,000 Jews, making up 70 percent of the population. By 1944, only ten were left alive, and the dead included most of Begin's family. He seemed ever after to be in perpetual mourning.

Begin spurned the semi-bohemian style of the Israeli political class; in office, he and his men wore neat business suits with dark ties. But if this sartorial choice could be thought of as signaling the end of naive idealism, Begin was too energized by memories and by his sense of righteousness to be a genuine realist. If anything, contrariness was his outstanding characteristic—and, to me at least, a delight. In 1979 I sat next to him in Jerusalem at the opening session of a conference on international terrorism that had been put together by the young Benjamin Netanyahu. Just before Begin spoke, I said to him, "Prime Minister, if I were you, I would not mention the King David Hotel affair." (As the leader of the underground Irgun in pre-state Palestine, Begin had given the order in July 1946 to blow up a section of the hotel that housed offices of the British mandatory government, causing extensive loss of life.) He replied: "Mr. Johnson, you have persuaded me that I should not merely mention it, I should *emphasize* it." And he did.

Before he finally became Prime Minister, Begin had lost, I calculate, more general elections than any other party leader in the history of democracy. So he had certainly learned patience. But once in power, he knew how to act decisively. Two of the most salutary events in Israel's history can be laid at his feet: peace with Egypt, and the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak. In the 1960's, I had written a long article about Israel entitled "The Militant Peacemaker." The fierce, sorrowing, tragic figure of Begin came, for me, to personify that paradox.

PEACE WITH Egypt made all the difference to Israel's security. I often feared for the country in the 1950's and 1960's, and even after its victory in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. But once Anwar Sadat, a serious and far-sighted man, signed the Camp David accords, I breathed easier. Israel, I thought, was now safe for the foreseeable future. Thanks to Israel's policy of realism, sometimes a necessary ultra-realism, a process of accommodation with Israel's neighbors had been made possible. Since the time of Begin, that process has been inching forward.

Almost as fortunate as the peace with Egypt was the collapse of Soviet Communism. The return of Russia to the ranks of the conventional great powers removed the last serious hope of the Arab extremists that, if only they waited and fought long enough, they would get the kind of apocalyptic solution they desired to the "problem" of Israel. Russia will undoubtedly remain an important factor in the Middle East, and will occasionally cause trouble there—especially as the country comes to develop less confused policies than at present. But today, as in the 19th century, Russia once again operates within the parameters of a moral code, and for Israel that can mean a great deal.

To be sure, some of Israel's enemies have remained intractable, while others wait to see what time and opportunity will afford: there will be many an agonizing passage to negotiate before the country can ever breathe easy. That is precisely why in my judgment it is a singularly lucky thing that Benjamin Netanyahu is now the Prime Minister. Like both Ben-Gurion and Begin, his two great predecessors, he is a figure who inspires fierce criticism and even hatred. Although ideologically akin to Begin, in his combination of ruthlessness tempered by idealism he actually reminds me more of Ben-Gurion. His geopolitical approach, too, is similar to Ben-Gurion's, although, having been a diplomat, he also knows how to be smooth where Ben-Gurion—let us not forget!—was much rougher.

Netanyahu differs from Ben-Gurion in his determination to unscramble the collectivist framework inherited from the state's youthful days. This is a very good thing: Israel is due—overdue—for Thatcherization and privatization. But given its obdurate and in certain respects arthritic economy, the task is huge. There are some people, ranging from pious Jews to left-wing fundamentalists, who do not want Israel to become rich. One may sympathize with them; but they are in a minority, and Israel is a democracy whose citizens, including its Arab citizens, want the material blessings of life.

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Such, at any rate, is the way ahead. Today's global economy puts the emphasis on educated and motivated people, and in this sphere Israel has a decided advantage. When the great migration of Russian Jews began in the late 1980's, it was the fashion to protest that the country really needed more farmers and craftsmen, not more university professors. I recall Shimon Peres's joke about going to Ben-Gurion airport to greet some new arrivals. "You see," complained the official standing next to him, "they're all concert violinists—look at the cases they're carrying." "That man doesn't have a case," Peres pointed out hopefully. Came the reply: "He's a pianist." On the whole, these brilliant soloists are faring well in Israel, at whatever they have learned to do, and their children will fare better.

The real task, and one that Netanyahu is well equipped to handle, is to create a society where—under conditions of peace—the clever children of Israel will want to stay, and where they can be confident they will flourish. Israel is an elite nation; in my opinion, that is what it *should* be, and unashamedly so, encouraging and training its people to be in the vanguard of the world's activity in agriculture and industry, in technology, in the arts, in education and administration, in the conquest and the preservation of nature. Israel must have its place among the nations (to borrow the title of a book by its Prime Minister). But it is not a nation *like* other nations. Willy-nilly, it is and will continue to be *sui generis*, its people shaped by the terrible events of our century, and marked by destiny.

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Israel and the United States: A Complex History

Norman Podhoretz

As an accompaniment to the celebrations of Israel's 50th birthday, there has been much talk about the lifelong friendship it has enjoyed with the United States. No one refers any longer, as many once did, to Israel as the "51st state of the Union," but there is a general impression in the air that throughout the first half-century of the Jewish state's existence, the U.S. has always been its best, and sometimes its only, friend among the nations. Unquestionably this impression contains a good deal of truth, but the whole picture is rather more complicated and more ambiguous. Examined in the round, this picture is also much more instructive as to why and how a crucial mistake that was made in the past, and that is still being made in the present, might be corrected in the future.

In looking for a prime example of the complexity and ambiguity to which I refer, the military sphere is a good place to begin. For a long time now, the U.S. has been the main supplier of the advanced military technology that has enabled Israel to maintain an edge over any foreseeable combination of the hostile and much more populous states surrounding it in the Arab world. Yet astonishing as it seems in retrospect, in Israel's War of Independence of 1948 it was not American military aid but arms from the Soviet bloc, coming mainly via Czechoslovakia, that enabled the newly declared Jewish state to fight off the invasion by five Arab armies hoping to nip this infant abomination in the bud. Weapons did reach Israel from the U.S. during the War of Independence, but they had to be smuggled in by private parties in defiance of an American embargo.

It was not because Stalin relished the idea of a Jewish state that he was so quick to help it survive a difficult birth, but because he saw in it a means of expelling British influence from the area: another retrospective astonishment is how worried Stalin was about British imperialism. Similarly with Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died by then but some of whose statements in his last years clearly pointed to the strange conviction that the moribund empire of the British posed a greater threat to the postwar order he envisaged than did the expanding empire of the Soviets. Harry Truman reportedly shared this view when he first became President after Roosevelt's death in 1945. If so, he had learned better by 1947.

At this point in the story, three more great retrospective surprises show up. The first involves France. Within recent memory, France has been very sour in its attitude toward Israel. (President

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Charles de Gaulle, in a case if ever there was one of the pot calling the kettle black, once declared that the Jews were "an elitist people, self-assured and domineering.") For the past three decades now, the French have also been friendly toward some of Israel's worst enemies. Yet from 1956 until 1967, it was France, of all countries, that served as the main supplier of arms to Israel. The second retrospective surprise of this period and in this context is that the necessary deals were negotiated by a very hawkish young Israeli named Shimon Peres—he who would later develop visions of a "new Middle East" as a materialist utopia in which everyone would strive to make money instead of war.

The third of the three retrospective surprises here concerns the U.S. As this was a time (the early 50's through the mid-60's) when the Soviet Union had long since abandoned its early support of Israel and had become the chief arms supplier of the Arab world—and in particular of the most fiercely anti-Israel states and radical factions within that world—one might have expected Washington to plunge enthusiastically into the gap. But no doubt because it did not want to write off these states altogether by seeming too closely associated with Israel, the U.S. was content to stand aside in favor of the French. Though it awarded Israel a certain amount of aid in the first decade of its existence, a full 95 percent of the money was earmarked for economic development and food. It was only in 1959 that formal military loans were first authorized, and those were very small.

The situation improved from the Israeli point of view after John F. Kennedy was elected President a year later, but not until the late 60's did the U.S. assume the role it would thereafter play as Israel's chief arms supplier. This lucky turn of events for Israel came in the nick of time, since in January 1969, France—resorting to one of those *renversements des alliances* at which it is so practiced—changed its policy and declared a complete embargo on the sale of military equipment to Israel.

A SIMILARLY mixed account can be given of American activity in the diplomatic sphere—which has its own relatively independent dynamic but cannot, as we shall see, always be cleanly separated from the military.

For as long as many people can remember in these days of short memories, the U.S. has been Israel's only defender in the endless debates at the United Nations and in other international bodies over resolutions condemning the Jewish state for every crime under the sun. From the number of hours spent on these debates over the years, one might easily have concluded that Israel, in addition to being solely responsible for the absence of peace and justice in the Middle East, was also the single most important obstacle to solving virtually every other problem on the face of the earth. Even meetings convened to discuss the rights of women, or the environment, or some other question totally unrelated to or remote from the Arab-Israeli conflict, became occasions for resolutions condemning Israel. The roving, versatile, and all-purpose assumption was that, whatever the offense being discussed or investigated, the Jewish state must be the guilty party.

In such debates, the U.S was usually the main dissenter, joined now and then by one or two tiny countries like Costa Rica and Barbados. Nations with greater heft, including America's European allies, would as a rule either side with the majority against Israel or abstain, leaving the U.S. to use its veto (if the Security Council were the venue) or to voice an ineffectual and diplomatically weak protest while voting with the invariably tiny minority.

The most notorious of all these debates was undoubtedly the resolution condemning Zionism as a form of racism, passed in November 1975 by the General Assembly (where, of course, the United States has no veto). Given that racism had already been defined by the UN as a crime, and given, too, that Zionism was Israel's very *raison d'être*, this resolution in effect convicted Israel of being an outlaw state. It thereby made a mighty contribution to the campaign on the diplomatic front of the Arab world's war against Israel.

The main objective of this campaign (spearheaded and masterminded in those days by the Soviet Union) was not to force Israel into changing this or that policy or withdrawing from this or that piece of land. It was, rather, to stigmatize the Jewish state as illegitimate in its very essence. Being illegitimate, it had no right to defend itself against attack, and if it did so, it was guilty of the added crime of aggression. As the then-President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had put it shortly before the outbreak of the Six-Day War of 1967: "Israel's existence is in itself an aggression." Conversely, anyone who might launch an actual aggression of any kind against Israel, whether in the form of terrorist bombings or assault by regular military forces, was, in the topsy-turvy conceptions of the UN, acting in self-defense and in accordance with international law.

As it happened, Daniel Patrick Moynihan was the American ambassador to the UN when the Zionism-racism resolution came up. Already noto-

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rious in Turtle Bay for his undiplomatic candor in defending his own country against defamatory attacks, Moynihan now denounced the "obscene" idea embodied in the Zionism-racism resolution in comparably forceful terms. In return, he was risibly accused of violating the proper norms of "courtesy and restraint" that, according to certain unnamed diplomats, otherwise always governed the proceedings in what had in fact become a veritable cesspool of anti-Israel rhetoric that could and frequently did spill easily over into plain old-fashioned anti-Semitism.

Moynihan also assembled a larger vote against the resolution than would probably have been the case if a less vehement or less savvy opponent of this Orwellian inversion of reality had been occupying the same office. Yet having been present during the vote, I well remember how grudging were those nations who followed the lead of the U.S. in voting no or at least abstaining.

One after another, their representatives marched to the platform to make speeches in "explanation of vote" that amounted to craven apologies for doing something that, they strongly hinted, went against the grain. One after another they marched to the platform to declare that they yielded to no one in their detestation of Israel's crimes, justifying their negative votes in purely practical terms by arguing that the resolution would prove unhelpful in the quest for a "just" solution. And one after another they marched to the platform and left it without a word of moral criticism, let alone censure, of the monstrous lie that was being propagated before their very eyes. Apart from Israel itself, only the U.S., speaking through Moynihan, made the case that needed to be made against the resolution, and in language adequate to the occasion in its eloquence and its moral reasoning.

MOYNIHAN'S SPEECH was the high point of American friendship toward Israel in the realm of public diplomacy up to that moment. But precisely because it constituted a high point, it became misleading when it was taken as a typical example of how the U.S. had conducted itself toward Israel in the past or how it would conduct itself in the future. To see how untypical it was, one had only to look at "the new 'tone'" (as the *New York Times*, quoting anonymous "Arab diplomats," approvingly described it) that would be set when, after only eight months, Moynihan resigned and was succeeded by William Scranton.

Losing no time in setting this new tone, Scranton used his very first speech in the Security Council to praise Ambassador Jamil L. Baroody of Saudi Arabia for "his inimitable wit and remarkable eloquence and, most important of all and truly and seriously, his very extraordinary knowledge of history." Yet only a day or so before, Baroody had given the UN an example of these sterling qualities by declaring that *The Diary of Anne Frank* was a forgery and that the Holocaust would in time be exposed as a myth "just as it came out that the Germans did not eat babies when they invaded Belgium in World War I"—a war, incidentally, which Baroody, vividly demonstrating his "very extraordinary knowledge of history," said the Zionists had forced Woodrow Wilson into entering.

Scranton's language, going as it did beyond the routine hypocrisies of diplomatic courtesy into outright sycophancy, was clearly intended to announce that Moynihan's conduct had been an unfortunate aberration and that things were now happily back to normal.

APPALLING THOUGH his obsequious words were, Scranton was right to imply that Moynihan's wholehearted support of Israel had been something of an aberration. After all, the United States had not even been wholehearted about the establishment of Israel in the first place—and this is putting the case much too mildly. For if it had been up to George Marshall, then Secretary of State, Israel would never have been born; and when in 1948, in spite of his wishes and those of his colleagues and subordinates (and their counterparts in the Pentagon), the new Jewish state officially came into existence, Washington would not even have extended diplomatic recognition to it if Marshall had had his way. Evidently his generosity in sponsoring a plan to help the peoples of Europe recover from the ravages of World War II did not extend to the one people who had been the most ravaged of all.

It was only because Marshall's objections, and those of the "Arabists" who dominated his department, were overridden by his boss, President Harry Truman, that the United States recognized the new Jewish state, and then only after Stalin (in the diplomatic part of his policy to get the British out) had already beaten him to the punch.

Moving on to the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower, we find a much greater coolness in the White House toward Israel than was the case when Truman occupied the Oval Office. But we also find at least as much unfriendliness in the State Department under its new head, John Foster Dulles, as had been evident under Marshall.

The key event here occurred when (to continue

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with the retrospective surprises of which there seem to be no end in this story) the Israeli army took part along with England and France in the Suez campaign of 1956. Eisenhower, who was no less firmly convinced of the evils and dangers of European colonialism than Roosevelt had been, responded angrily. In addition to being, or perhaps only pretending to be, morally outraged, he was also anxious, with the cold war in full swing, to win what came to be called the "hearts and minds" of the newly independent states of the third world so as to keep them out of the Soviet orbit. He therefore pressured the British and the French into abandoning their effort to topple Nasser for having taken over the Suez Canal.

The role assigned to the Israelis in the Suez campaign had been to invade and occupy the Sinai desert, which they proceeded to do. It went without saying that Eisenhower would be even more furious with these annoyingly brazen Jewish upstarts than with old and respected allies like the British and the French whom he reproached in tones of sad regret. It was with no regret, and on pain of various punishments, that he ordered the Israelis to withdraw—and withdraw they did. Meanwhile, Dulles, notoriously exposing his knowledge of Middle Eastern realities, wondered in public why the Israelis and the Arabs could not sit down and settle the dispute between them like "Christian gentlemen."

Apart from questions of personal feeling, the Eisenhower administration's animus against Israel stemmed from two main considerations. The first, obviously, was oil. Support of Israel, however limited in extent, served as an irritant in American relations with those countries in the Arab world (most notably Saudi Arabia) that were friendlier to Washington than to Moscow, and could potentially jeopardize the flow of cheap oil from the Middle East. The second was Soviet influence in the region. As I have already noted, the Soviets had by now switched from helping Israel as a way of expelling the British from the region to opposing Israel as a way of winning out over the U.S. in competing for the favor of the Arab states. With these two circumstances in mind, many people in the U.S., and especially in official Washington, and most especially within the State Department, thought it a species of political and strategic insanity to care as much about the approximately two million Jews living in one tiny country as about the 80 or so million Arabs living in more than twenty countries, some of which, moreover, were sitting atop the world's greatest and most reliable reserves of oil.

UNDER THE Democratic administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, Washington became considerably warmer toward Israel than the Republicans under Eisenhower had been. Again leaving aside the role of personal feelings, it is undeniable that one reason for this change was the fact that the vast majority of American Jews were Democrats who lived in populous states like New York with large numbers of votes in the electoral college. Thus, even though they constituted a small minority in the population as a whole, Jews were a crucial constituency for the Democrats in any presidential election (and all the more so because they tended to turn up at the polls in exceptionally large numbers while also tending to be unusually generous with campaign contributions). Keeping them happy was naturally much more important to the Democrats than to the Republicans, and one way of keeping them happy was to be more favorably disposed toward Israel.[1]

But it would be foolish to conclude that domestic political considerations were the only or even the most important factor behind the Kennedy administration's idea that a "strategic relationship" was called for with Israel. Such a conclusion would also be wrong, since the idea had originated not with Kennedy but—adding one more item to our ever-growing pile of retrospective surprises—with Eisenhower. Having first tilted against Israel for fear of abandoning the Arab world to the Soviets, Eisenhower now drew a more sophisticated analysis from his experience as President, and especially from his frustrating dealings with Nasser. As one writer has put it:

> The idea of a strategic relationship between the United States and Israel emerged after the Suez crisis, when the Eisenhower administration realized that both countries had an interest in containing Nasser's influence. Because the Eisenhower administration feared that the Soviets were gaining clout in some Arab countries, such a relationship was seen as useful in containing the Soviet Union as well.

Since Kennedy fully agreed with this view of the American national interest, domestic political considerations conveniently undergirded what the

[1]It should be noted, however, that American Jews were then by no means as united in their support of Israel as they would become after 1967. Many approved of Eisenhower's policy in the Suez crisis, and many others were in general either relatively indifferent to Israel or unfriendly to it. All this changed in 1967, when what I was to call the "Zionization of American Jews" would take place—a process that would then be further strengthened by the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

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strategic necessities of the cold war dictated. Following through, the U.S. now for the first time supplied Israel with sophisticated weapons and committed itself to maintaining Israeli military superiority in the region. The hope behind this policy was that compensating for Israel's inferiority in numbers would maintain peace and stability by deterring any large new Arab assaults.

Still, if the White House became warmer, there was little change in the atmosphere at the State Department, where the Arabists among the career foreign-service officers remained the dominant presence at the Middle East "desk." Dean Rusk, whom Kennedy appointed Secretary of State and who was then kept on by Johnson after Kennedy's assassination in 1963, also took the department's traditional view of Israel as a nuisance whose very existence created (as it were) a cross that American interests in the Middle East had no choice but to bear. But with the deepening involvement of the U.S. in Vietnam—a policy Rusk enthusiastically supported—his attentions were not for the most part drawn to the Middle East.

Not, that is, until 1967, when Nasser closed off the Straits of Tiran, thereby instituting a blockade of the port of Eilat, Israel's only outlet to the Red Sea. Such a blockade had been instituted by Egypt before, and breaking it had formed one of Israel's motives for joining with England and France in the Suez campaign. Hence Eisenhower and Dulles, in demanding that Israel pull out of the Sinai, had been willing to promise that action would be taken against any future efforts to close the Straits. Yet for two weeks after Nasser did just that, Johnson did nothing.

There was a kind of sick-joke aspect to Johnson's uncharacteristic passivity. According to Lucius D. Battle, who had been the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Middle East under Dulles, the U.S. in 1967 was "unable to find the record of the meetings and the discussions of the 1956 period," which, he said, "were, for economic reasons, stored in the Middle West—Cleveland, I believe—and were therefore not available when we needed them." Thus "the obligations that Mr. Dulles undertook at the earlier time were unclear and unknown." Battle recalled Dulles's assurances as "vague," but he acknowledged that the Israelis, whose "records of the conversations" were, unlike the U.S.'s, "readily available," also "proved accurate." Nevertheless, he added, "These assurances were weak reeds and meaningless in the face of crisis."

Indeed they were. While the Israelis waited for the U.S. to honor what they had taken in good faith as a solemn commitment, Johnson instead declared an embargo on arms to the area (though it would later be claimed that at the same time he secretly sent military supplies of various kinds and even American pilots to Israel).

As the U.S. dithered, the armies of the Arab countries bordering Israel maintained themselves in a state of full mobilization, and Nasser and others issued a steady stream of bloodcurdling threats to destroy Israel and drive its Jewish inhabitants "into the sea." Finally, persuaded that it was too risky to wait any longer for the blow to fall, Israel launched a preemptive strike, and in six short days went on to win one of the most brilliant victories in military history.

MEMORIES, AS I have already had occasion to remark, are so short, and propaganda is so long, that it seems necessary at this juncture to stress what should be a self-evident point: namely, that only now, and for the first time, did the issue of "occupied territories" arise. Before the Six-Day War—and except for the very brief period after the Suez campaign when Israel sat astride the Sinai—the only territory "occupied" by Israel consisted of the state itself, within the constricted and crazy-quilt boundaries set by the armistice agreements that ended the War of Independence of 1948.

Not that this prevented the Arabs and their friends and apologists from harping as much on the injustices that Israel's existence allegedly entailed as they would after 1967. The principal one before 1967 concerned the Palestinian Arabs who (in the Israeli version) had been encouraged in 1948 by their own invading "brothers" to flee from their homes, or (in the Arab account) had been driven out by the Israelis. In either case, several hundred thousand of them (the exact numbers have always been in dispute) now lived in squalid refugee camps in Jordan, the Gaza Strip (then under Egyptian control), and Lebanon. Always overlooked by everyone but the Israelis and their friends was that these refugees were living in such conditions only because the surrounding Arab states wanted to exploit their plight for political purposes instead of relieving it by resettling and absorbing them, as the Israelis had done with the roughly equivalent number of Jewish refugees (again the exact numbers remain in dispute) who had fled from those very states.

In the pre-1967 period, the Arab world made no bones about its intention of rectifying this injustice to the Palestinians by eliminating the cause—that is, by defeating Israel in war, expelling its Jewish in-

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habitants, and bringing the "rightful" owners of the country back to their land and to their original homes. Clearly this openly genocidal ambition could not be, and never was, endorsed by the U.S. (or, for that matter, by any other non-Muslim nation outside the Arab bloc, not even the Soviet Union in its most frenzied anti-Israel phases). But American policy, backed by establishment opinion in this country, which was in turn backed by important elements of the American Jewish community itself, met the Arabs at least part of the way by dwelling continuously on the refugee problem. The assumption was that the Arabs, in accordance with their own peculiar cultural norms, were exaggerating when they asserted that they wanted to get rid of the Jewish state altogether and had no intention of coexisting with it in any form. Surely they were more rational than that: surely they would be willing to accept the presence of a Jewish state in their midst if only some sort of reasonable compromise could be reached on the refugee problem and a few other sticky details.

After the Six-Day War, with Israel having conquered the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria, the focus shifted from refugees to land. In line with this shift, American diplomacy began concentrating on schemes for achieving a peace involving the return by Israel of the conquered territories (except for minor modifications to ensure greater security from attack) in exchange for recognition of the Jewish state by the Arabs. In the immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, the Israelis were not yet seen as the obstacle to some such arrangement since they were only too eager to negotiate one. But instead of the phone call from Cairo that Defense Minister Moshe Dayan famously said he expected ("We are waiting for them to ring us up"), the Egyptians together with all the other Arab states issued their even more famous "Three No's" at a conference in Khartoum in August 1967: "No peace, no recognition, no negotiations."

In spite of this unequivocal declaration, the Arab states—here is still another retrospective surprise—were willing to accept Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967, which enshrined the very concept of land-for-peace that they had repudiated at Khartoum only three months earlier. The reason they could do this was that they interpreted 242 as requiring Israel to withdraw from *all* the territories before they themselves would consider agreeing not to a full peace but only—and at most—to a declaration of nonbelligerency. Interpreted in this way, the resolution was easy enough for the Arabs to swallow.

Although, incredibly (but in this instance not surprisingly, and certainly not so in retrospect), Israeli "intransigence" was almost always blamed, it was largely because of the position taken by the Arabs on 242 that nothing came of the many peace plans that were devised by American and Israeli "doves" both in and out of government. Some of these plans were simple and some were complicated; some were straightforward and some were ingenious to a fault. But none had any takers in the Arab world, which remained, if anything, even more fixated on the elimination of Israel within its post-1967 boundaries than it had been when the Jewish state was still confined to the narrower borders of 1948.

And why not? If it was "Israel's existence in itself," as Nasser had said then, that constituted the "aggression," how much truer had this become now that the aggression had extended to even greater stretches of Arab land? Resolution 242 or no Resolution 242, there was not the slightest intention anywhere in the Arab world of accepting a sovereign Jewish state as legitimate and of making peace with it, no matter where its boundaries might be drawn and no matter what its policies might be.

In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected President, succeeding Lyndon Johnson. Soon after taking office, he dispatched Baroody's future admirer William Scranton to the Middle East and launched a new plan, named after his first Secretary of State, William Rogers, for making peace first between Israel and Egypt and then between Israel and the rest of the Arab world. By this point, the U.S., after eight years of Democratic rule, had been attacked over and over by the Arabs and their supporters as being biased in favor of Israel. Through both the Scranton mission and the Rogers Plan, Nixon was signaling a return to the "evenhandedness" of the Republican past.

Because this term was taken by Israel and its supporters as a euphemism for a tilt toward the Arabs, it caused much alarm. Yet in reality the Rogers Plan did not differ much to the naked eye from Resolution 242 in proposing Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territory in exchange for a "binding commitment" by Egypt to "all the obligations of peace." Be that as it may, this latest wrinkle on an old scheme proved no more successful than any of its predecessors, and neither did Nixon's sporadic attempts to extend its principles to the other Arab participants in the war against Israel.

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The stalemate continued throughout the remainder of Nixon's first term and into the first year of his second, when Rogers was replaced by Henry Kissinger, previously National Security Adviser, as Secretary of State. Being Jewish, and hence subject to suspicions of pro-Israel bias, Kissinger had been kept away from the Middle East, but the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 pushed him into it with both feet.

In contrast to what had happened in 1967, this time the Israelis were caught off guard by Egypt and Syria and came perilously close to suffering a calamitous rout. In the first two days of the war alone, 2,000 Israeli soldiers were killed and 340 captured, while 49 planes were shot down and 500 tanks destroyed. Frantic calls went forth from Jerusalem to Washington appealing for emergency military supplies to make up for these losses, and after some hesitation, the appeals were answered with a massive airlift that saved the day and helped Israel turn the tide.[2]

But no sooner had the tide turned than Israel was presented with a bill. Thanks in part to the airlift, and in part to the brilliant generalship of Ariel Sharon, who commanded that sector, the Israelis quickly had the Egyptian Third Army surrounded and could easily have crushed it. But they were prevented from doing so by Nixon and Kissinger, both of whom believed that only if Egypt emerged from the war with its honor intact could a reasonable postwar political settlement be negotiated. (Both were also eager to seize the opportunity of winning over Anwar Sadat, who had followed Nasser as President of Egypt and who had already run into conflict with his Soviet allies—an opportunity they would later exploit to great effect.) In other words, the Nixon-Kissinger policy was to prevent the Israelis both from losing and from winning big. Whatever the merits of this policy, the saving of the Egyptian Third Army was as necessary to its implementation as the airlift had been.

FOLLOWING THE end of the Yom Kippur War, Kissinger embarked on two years of "shuttle diplomacy" that eventually resulted in the "separation" of Israeli forces from those of Egypt in the Sinai and of Syria on the Golan Heights. What Israel got in exchange for the concessions extracted from it in these negotiations were new supplies of advanced weapons. But it also got a commitment from the United States not to recognize or deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization until such time as it had changed its stripes by renouncing terrorism and recognizing Israel. In contrast to the commitment made by Dulles concerning the Straits of Tiran, this one was easily secured and willingly given. For the PLO was precisely the kind of radical Soviet-backed terrorist group that Kissinger saw as a threat to the stability he prized and that he was working to counter not only in the Middle East but in other parts of the world.

But Kissinger's view of the PLO was by no means universally shared. On the contrary, as time went on, greater and greater currency was given to the notion that peace could be achieved if only Israel would drop its refusal to recognize the PLO as the "legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." If it were to do so, it could then safely remove its troops from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and just as safely permit a Palestinian state to be established there under the leadership of Yasir Arafat (whose gradual metamorphosis from terrorist to political moderate became a staple of pro-Arab and anti-Israel propaganda in the West).

This idea of a Palestinian state run by the PLO had by the mid-70's become a new and very troublesome element in the situation. Originally, Israel was supposed to return the West Bank to Jordan and the Gaza Strip to Egypt, which had controlled them before 1967 and from whom they had been conquered.[3] No mention was made of the Palestinians at all in Resolution 242, for example, and still less of their right to sovereignty over the territories.

In Israel, there was widespread support for one version or another (and there were many) of the "Jordanian option," all of which entailed turning the West Bank over to King Hussein. But unfortunately for those who had invested their hopes in this idea, which they saw as a better solution to the Palestinian problem than either continued Israeli occupation or a PLO state, King Hussein in 1988 renounced any further claim to the West Bank (while Egypt, for its part, showed no interest in once again assuming responsibility for Gaza). And

[2] At the time there was a great dispute over whether it was Kissinger or James Schlesinger, the then-Secretary of Defense, who was responsible for the delay. Without going into all the details, I will simply say here for the record that I was on the side of those who blamed Kissinger but that I later changed my mind as a result of private conversations with Kissinger himself, Simcha Dinitz, who was then Israel's ambassador to the U.S., and Yitzhak Rabin, who was then Israel's Minister of Defense. In any case, the real hero of this episode from the Israeli point of view was Richard Nixon who, once apprised that obstacles were being put in the way, ordered in no uncertain terms that the Pentagon carry out the airlift immediately, no matter what.

[3] The Golan Heights did not come in here, for the simple reason that no Palestinians lived there. Moreover, no one in Israel then contemplated surrendering them to Syria and thereby once again exposing the northern part of their country to the mercies of Syrian guns.

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though he had never said a word about setting up a Palestinian state there while he had the power to do so, the King now declared himself in favor of such a state as the only way to satisfy the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

Nevertheless, those in the know kept assuring us that Hussein—fearing that a state run by the PLO would, even before making its move on Israel, try to take over his own country, which already contained a Palestinian majority—really did not mean what he said. But while they went on saying that he did not mean it, he went on saying that he did, and this counted for more than any secret assurances to the contrary he may have whispered into the eager ears of various journalists and politicians.

IN 1976, Jimmy Carter came to the presidency with an administration that was soon to disabuse anyone of the notion that "evenhandedness" was a Republican monopoly. The President himself, his Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, and his National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, were all firm believers (in Brzezinski's case from way back, obsessively, and with a vengeance) in the need to get Israel out of the occupied territories and back to its pre-'67 borders, give or take a kilometer or two. Whereas Nixon and Kissinger tended to think in terms of the conflict as one between the Arab *states* and Israel, Carter and his people were convinced that the Palestinian problem was at its center and formed the "key" to its resolution. Accordingly, they made a much greater fuss over the building of Jewish settlements in the territories, which they regarded both as "illegal" and as the major obstacle to peace, not only with the Palestinians but with all the other states in the region.

All the more did the issue of settlements become a sore point in U.S. relations with the Israelis when, around the same time Carter was elected, Menachem Begin of Likud became the first non-Labor Prime Minister in the history of Israel. Though the Labor governments preceding Begin had inaugurated the policy of establishing a Jewish presence in the territories, their main rationale had been security. With Begin it was different. He was an old disciple of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist branch of the Zionist movement whose slogan in the pre-'48 debates over the boundaries of the future state had been "Both Banks of the Jordan." As an unreconstructed Revisionist, Begin believed that the whole of the biblical Land of Israel (whose very heart was located on the West Bank, or what he insisted on calling by the biblical names of Judea and Samaria) rightfully belonged to the Israel of today. He was, therefore, not about to agree that there was anything wrong with encouraging Jews to live on land that formed part of their ancestral homeland.

So far as Begin was concerned, however, the Sinai was not part of Israel's patrimony, which was why he was perfectly willing to give it up in exchange for a separate peace with Egypt. The groundwork for such a peace had been set by Nixon and Kissinger in wooing Sadat further away from the Soviet bloc and more and more deeply into the American camp; and in the eyes of most Israelis—though by no means all, either then or in the future—this retroactively justified the policy of saving the Egyptian Third Army that had in equal measure infuriated and mystified them at the time. (As an eyewitness, I can testify to how bizarre was the spectacle of supplies for the Third Army being allowed to pass through Israeli lines and under the guns and the gazes of Sharon's bewildered troops.)

To come now to yet another retrospective surprise, Carter was at first furious over the prospect of bilateral negotiations between Egypt and Israel. His preferred objective was a more ambitious "comprehensive peace" involving all the Arab parties to the dispute, including even Syria, one of the most "rejectionist" of them all. Besides, he and his people feared that a separate peace would let Israel off the hook on the Palestinian problem which, to repeat (and the point was to prove so important that it cannot be repeated too often), they saw as the key to the larger goal on which they had set their sights.

In pursuit of that goal, Carter tried to bring the Soviet Union back into the picture by proposing a new Geneva conference that would be jointly chaired by the U.S. and the USSR. This incredibly stupid move was too much for Sadat, who had expelled his Soviet advisers from Egypt and whose every muscle since then had been bent on keeping them *out* of the picture. In order to head Carter off, Sadat took matters into his own hands by making a highly dramatic journey to Jerusalem. Pushed in this and other ways, including by his fellow Democrats in Congress, Carter finally gave up on the idea of a Soviet-American initiative and gave in to the idea of a separate negotiation between Egypt and Israel. In 1978, he invited the two nations to Camp David, where they eventually concluded the first peace treaty between any Arab state and the Jewish state to which all the others still denied recognition.

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ONE OF the main reasons the negotiations at Camp David took as long as they did—even at one point breaking down altogether—was precisely that the Americans wanted to make sure that Israel would *not* be let off the hook on the Palestinian issue. Begin's position was that the Palestinians could have autonomy but not sovereignty, while, in their heart of hearts, Carter and his people were already dreaming the dream of statehood. (Brzezinski, for one, had long been on record as approving a Palestinian state, and when years later I asked a former high official of the Carter administration if he too had secretly favored statehood back then, he answered with a big grin, "You bet I did!")

But that the time was not yet ripe for translating the dream of Palestinian statehood into policy would become abundantly evident with the discovery in 1979—soon after the Camp David accords had already been concluded—that Carter's ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, had secretly met with a PLO official. This was an egregious violation of the commitment that had been made to Israel by Kissinger against any such dealings, and since this particular commitment had neither been forgotten by the American side nor hidden away in Cleveland, there was a huge outcry. However, even before the Young incident erupted, the political circumstances on which it cast so dramatic a light were clear enough, and they forced Carter and his people to settle for extracting promises from Begin concerning the widening of Palestinian self-rule in the territories and the narrowing of settlements there.

But the Carter administration—again in its heart of hearts and sometimes virtually in the words on its tongue—agreed with the Palestinians and their supporters that all Begin's autonomy gave them was "the right to collect their own garbage," and it soon began protesting that Begin was failing to keep the promises he had made at Camp David. Relations between the two governments now grew so ugly, and the tone taken by Carter toward Israel so acerbic, that when he ran for reelection against Ronald Reagan he became the first Democratic candidate in decades who failed to win a majority of the Jewish vote.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, now a Democratic member of the U.S. Senate (to which he had been elected from New York in 1976), ascribed Carter's disastrous defeat in large measure to the fact that his administration had been guilty of "joining the jackals" at the UN.[4] By this Moynihan meant that the Carter administration had acquiesced and even joined in votes designed to complete what the Zionism-racism resolution had begun—the stigmatizing of Israel as an illegitimate and outlaw state, the better to set it up for devouring by the predators already nipping at its heels.

THAT RONALD REAGAN had much warmer feelings toward Israel than Carter was obvious. He liked Israel for being democratic and he admired it for being spunky and tough. His first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was also far more sympathetic to Israel than Cyrus Vance had been. And Haig's successor, George Shultz, who began his tenure with a suspicious attitude toward Israel, soon changed his mind and similarly became (in sharp contrast to his former business partner, Caspar Weinberger, now Secretary of Defense) a strong supporter. As for Reagan's ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick—even granting that her Carterite predecessors (first Andrew Young and then Donald McHenry) were an easy act to follow, especially in this context—she would turn out to be the most forceful defender of Israel in that body since Moynihan.[5]

Yet exactly because of all this, the record of the Reagan administration is a perfect illustration of the complexity and ambiguity that have attended American relations with Israel even at their best. Consider what happened when Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak in 1981. Later it would be recognized that Israel had done the world a great service by thus retarding Saddam Hussein's development of nuclear weapons. But (the retrospective surprises continue to pile up even as we approach the present), it was under Ronald Reagan, and with a very unhappy and deeply embarrassed Jeane Kirkpatrick casting the vote, that the United States once again joined the jackals in a resolution condemning Israel's action.[6]

[4] See Moynihan's article, "Joining the Jackals: The U.S. at the UN 1977-1980," COMMENTARY, February 1981.

[5] This was not, I hasten to say, necessarily predictable from the fact that both got their jobs through articles in COMMENTARY. Moynihan's "The United States in Opposition" (March 1975), on the basis of which Nixon's successor Gerald Ford appointed him ambassador to the UN, contained only a passing reference to Israel. Kirkpatrick's "Dictatorships and Double Standards" (November 1979), which led to her appointment by Reagan, did not mention Israel at all. It is true, however, that the strongly anti-Communist and the proudly nationalist world view shared by the two articles and their authors, as well as their joint refusal to sit still for anti-American and anti-Western nonsense, would naturally incline them to sympathize with the only democratic country in the Middle East and one of the few reliable friends of the United States in that volatile region.

[6] Kirkpatrick richly made up for following the orders of her superiors on this matter by becoming, both during the remainder of her UN term and then as a speaker and a writer, one of the most passionate, enthusiastic, and consistent defenders of Israel in the world.

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There was a repeat a year later when Israel invaded Lebanon in the hope of driving the PLO out of the stronghold it had established there and from which it had been staging attacks on communities in the north of Israel. Reagan himself voiced sharp disapproval of this incursion once the casualties began to appear on television—and most particularly after massacres were perpetrated by Israel's allies, the Lebanese Christian Phalange, against Palestinian Muslims in the refugee camps at Sabra and Shatilla.[7] Furthermore, the Reagan administration decided to escort Arafat and what remained of his troops out of Lebanon and into a safe haven before the Israelis could catch up with them.

This was a kind of replay of what Nixon and Kissinger had done with the Egyptian Third Army in 1973, and there were those who came to believe that it ultimately had an analogously benign result. That is, it set the stage for the Oslo agreements between Israel and the PLO that would be negotiated in 1993 during the presidency of Bill Clinton. About that we shall see in due course. For the moment, however, what I wish to stress is that even under so great an admirer as Ronald Reagan, and even when it was acting in America's interest as well as its own, Israel could not necessarily depend on wholehearted American support or approval.

BUT WORSE—much worse—was yet to come when George Bush followed Reagan into the presidency in 1988. Adopting the nastiness of tone that had been latterly set by the Carter administration, the new President, his Secretary of State James Baker, and his National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft went Carter, Vance, and Brzezinski one better in what could only be described as their obsessive focus on the issue of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

For instance, when Yitzhak Shamir, who was now Prime Minister of Israel and who took the same view as his fellow Likudnik Menachem Begin on this issue, objected to the "freeze" demanded by Bush, the response from the White House was to announce that it would delay a previously promised loan guarantee needed by Israel to house Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. As if this were not bad enough, the President of the most powerful nation on earth went on to portray himself as "one lonely little guy" up against "something like a thousand lobbyists on the Hill" who were working to prevent him from postponing the loan. For playing so blatantly into the canard that America's alliance with Israel was based on the illegitimate manipulation of domestic politics by an all-powerful Jewish lobby, the "lonely little guy" won his delay. But he also called forth an avalanche of congratulatory mail so virulently anti-Semitic that it reportedly caused him to regret his use of so squalid a tactic.

This particular dispute arose after the end of the Gulf war, but there were no reports of presidential regret over another statement Bush had made in the same press conference that was even more unjust and offensive:

> Just months ago, American men and women in uniform risked their lives to defend Israelis in the face of Iraqi Scud missiles, and indeed Desert Storm, while winning a war against aggression, also achieved the defeat of Israel's most dangerous adversary.

Yet as Bush well knew, the only reason the Israelis had to be defended by Americans was that he himself had adamantly refused, against their persistent importunings, to allow them to defend themselves. "Over my dead body," he had told a visitor who suggested that it might be a good idea to let the Israelis join the coalition he was then in the process of building to fight the Gulf war. If the Israelis were to enter the fighting, he said, the Arab members of the coalition would be driven out. Yet while the war was going on and Iraqi missiles were raining down on Tel Aviv, the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, and even the Syrians let it be known more than once that they would stand by if Israel were to take defensive retaliatory action against Iraq.

Well aware of this (how could he not be when the information was published in the American press?), Bush twice seemed to relent. First, after much urging by Israel, he gave the green light to a commando raid—the kind at which the Israelis were so famously skilled—that would go after the Scuds hidden in the Iraqi desert even from the "smart" eyes of American planes. At the last minute, however, he changed his mind. Then he agreed to an Israeli air raid on Iraq that would make use of a special bomb cunningly designed to burrow its way by stages down to Scud bunkers buried deep in the earth.

The effectiveness of this weapon depended on flying dangerously lower than anyone in the coalition was trained to do. But a special group of Israeli pilots had been preparing for years to execute just

[7] Here, too, the world, including the U.S., treated Israel as the guilty party. As Begin is said to have bitterly remarked, "Christians come to murder Muslims, and everyone blames the Jews." (According to other reports, what Begin actually said was cruder: "*Goyim* kill *goyim* and they blame the Jews.")

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such a maneuver and were raring to put it into practice. To do so, they needed the codes that would identify their planes to other allied planes in the sky and vice versa, and thus prevent them from shooting one another down. Once again changing his mind, Bush ordered that the codes be withheld just as the Israeli planes were waiting to take off. (The greatest irony of this episode is that, as we now know, the American-led coalition did not destroy a single Iraqi Scud during the war. The only targets found by its smart bombs were launchers and dummies.)

No, while Bush's purpose before the war in keeping the Israelis out may honestly have been to hold the coalition together, this was not the case during the war itself. His motive then was to be able, at the proper time, to throw in the faces of the Israelis the very statement I have just quoted above. For this statement served as yet another way to bully them into accepting the settlement freeze and other conditions that were necessary to the peace conference in Madrid that Bush and Baker were for some mysterious reason more bent on convening than they were on making sure that Saddam Hussein would not soon recover from his defeat.

In this, if not with Saddam, they were successful. Even Yitzhak Shamir, perhaps the most stubborn leader Israel had ever had, agreed to go to Madrid once he had wrested a few face-saving concessions from Baker. No doubt Shamir yielded because he saw no way out and probably thought it best to buy time by pushing the old idea of Palestinian autonomy as an alternative to sovereignty.

NOTHING MUCH happened either at Madrid or in the various conferences that were its progeny: between, on one track, Israelis and Palestinians (who the Israelis agreed to pretend were not representatives of the PLO) and, on another track, Israelis and Syrians. This was generally held by Bush and Baker, and everyone else, to be Shamir's fault: he was, they all said, dragging his feet. For once, blaming Israel may have been justified. Shamir clearly had no faith in the "peace process" and was violently opposed on both ideological and strategic grounds to the Palestinian state toward which, in spite of continued denials by the American government, the process was implicitly—and deliberately—headed. Nor was he about to satisfy the other objective of the process—the return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

Yet once Shamir had set his feet on the path marked out by Madrid, dragging them became almost pointless. In a lecture during the period leading up to the Gulf war, I shocked my audience by saying that at this stage in their history, the Jewish people needed a "mean little prick who could say no," and that God had answered this need by creating Yitzhak Shamir. But if I was in some sense right, it followed that when Shamir had said yes to staying out of the war and then yes again to Madrid, he tragically became a Jonah-like figure fleeing from his divinely appointed role.

Unlike Jonah in the belly of the whale, however, Shamir was not then "spewed out" into the same situation from which he had been trying to escape. Less than a year after Madrid, the Labor party behind Yitzhak Rabin ousted him, and he disappeared entirely from the political scene. With Baker and Bush thus relieved of the leader they most detested in all of Israel, the relations between the two countries turned from sour to sweet overnight.

And why not? The new Rabin government, with the hawk-turned-dove Shimon Peres as Foreign Minister, needed no prodding from the Bush administration to declare an immediate freeze on settlements. Nor was Rabin suspected of dragging *his* feet in the "peace process." Unlike Shamir's Likud, the Labor party of Rabin and Peres was apparently champing at the bit to "trade territory for peace," both with the Palestinians in the West Bank and with the Syrians on the Golan Heights. In fact, so far as anyone could tell, there was nothing the Bush administration was ready to ask of Israel that the Rabin government was not prepared to give. If one might reasonably say that with Shamir in power Israel was being raped, one might also say that with Shamir out of the way the victim decided to lie back and enjoy it. And when, a little while later, Bush was ousted in his turn by Bill Clinton, what had become a consensual affair blossomed—if I may extend what will perhaps already have struck some as a tasteless metaphor—into a loving marriage.

And again why not? Without (so far as we know) a single direct push from the U.S., Rabin and Peres set off on the road from Madrid to Oslo and then from Oslo all the way to the White House lawn. There, under the beaming gaze of President Clinton, Rabin overcame his visible misgivings and disgust and shook the hand of Yasir Arafat, a hand still dripping with Jewish blood and soon to be dripping with even more. No American administration would have dared demand that Israel do this much this fast; indeed, for demanding a lot less, Bush and Baker had been widely accused of anti-Semitism.

Nor could Rabin have been elected if the voters of Israel had anticipated what would transpire on

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the White House lawn. Just the opposite: it was largely because he had a solid reputation as a hardliner that he had been chosen to lead Labor into battle with Likud, and it was largely because he had promised in no uncertain terms during his election campaign that he would never accept or deal with the PLO that he overcame the suspicions of excessive dovishness and insufficient concern for security that attached to his party. These suspicions were fueled by the not insignificant faction within Labor that had either openly or covertly associated itself with smaller parties like Meretz and organizations like Peace Now that were clamoring explicitly for just such a change in policy toward the PLO. The most prominent, not-so-secret member of that faction was Peres. But not Rabin: not in public and not in private.[8] Hence there are those who say that it was only as a result of being outwitted by the more cunning Peres that Rabin was maneuvered into changing his mind and breaking his campaign promises.

BUT WHETHER Rabin was maneuvered by Peres or by his own inner drives, it does seem to be true that Peres had been in on the secret negotiations at Oslo between Israel and the PLO before Rabin was ever apprised of them. It has also been reported, and may also well be true, that Rabin was at first angry over these negotiations and that (in one account) he demanded they be called off or (in another) acquiesced in their continuation but resisted endorsing them until the last possible minute.

If, as I am inclined to believe, the latter version is accurate, it is highly unlikely that he stopped resisting because he accepted Peres's rationale. No one who knew Rabin could possibly imagine that he would fall for the vision Peres had developed of that utopia to which the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were supposedly giving birth. But then again, who would have predicted that Peres himself would ever undergo so radical a transformation from hawk to dove—a conversion that in American terms would be comparable to Scoop Jackson's turning into George McGovern? Not I, certainly, and I had known him better and for an even longer period than I had known Rabin.

What then had happened to Peres, and why did Rabin go along with him? After all, the two of them, together with virtually all Israelis of whatever political persuasion, had always understood in the past that the threat to Israel derived not from anything they themselves did or failed to do, but from the refusal of the Arab world to reconcile itself to the presence in its midst of a sovereign Jewish state of *any* size or shape or political character. They had always understood that until the Arab world made its own peace with the existence of Israel, there was no way Israel could make peace with the Arab world. If Israel remained strong enough to discourage or, if necessary, defeat any coalition of Arab countries that decided to try the "military option," they might eventually give up their hope of eliminating the Jewish state from the region. But short of that, there was little Israel could do to force the pace of a development that might some day come about but that showed no convincing sign as yet of really beginning to materialize.

The foreign ministries and the opinion leaders of practically every other nation on the face of the earth, including the U.S., saw it all differently. To them the war that had in one form or another been waged by the Arabs against the Jewish state from the moment of its birth had been transmuted through another bit of Orwellian alchemy into a war by the Jewish state against the Arabs. To them the determination expressed by the Arabs to wipe the Jewish state off the face of the map was just empty rhetoric (or "rodomontade," to use the notorious term Hannah Arendt had applied to analogous declarations by Adolf Eichmann). To them the main, and even the sole, obstacle to peace was Israeli "intransigence." To them, it was up to the Israelis to make peace with the Arabs, not the other way around.

My theory is that what happened to Rabin and Peres, and approximately half of the population of Israel along with them, was that, after a lifetime of knowing better, they finally bought into the world's version of their conflict with the Arabs. They did so because after living all that time in a state of siege punctuated again and again by bloody and

[8] To add my own little tidbit to the historical record here, during the election campaign I had dinner in New York with Rabin, whom I had known since 1967. I took the occasion to vent my anxiety over the growing influence of the left-wing faction within his party that favored Palestinian sovereignty on the West Bank and Gaza and Syrian sovereignty on the Golan Heights. He responded by telling me not to worry, that he could handle those people, and that he "hated" them—that was his exact word—even more than I did. He never said anything quite that blunt to the Israeli voters, but they got the idea anyway. Many who voted for him therefore became very bitter when he began breaking his promises, and the most bitter of all were the residents of the Golan Heights. Unlike the settlers in Judea and Samaria, the people on the Golan were mostly veteran members of the Labor party and therefore felt that they were being betrayed by one of their own. When Rabin was later assassinated by a religious fanatic, the charge was made that the right wing had created the incentive for such an act, but the anti-Rabin posters I saw on the Golan Heights in 1993 and the words I heard spoken there were far uglier and more menacing than anything I encountered in Judea and Samaria.

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costly military eruptions, they had become war-weary; they did so because after being pounded without let-up by the moral pressures relentlessly exerted on them by just about everyone in the world, they had become doubtful of the justice of their own position; they did so because they had finally lost a war—the war known as the *intifada*—and were demoralized by the experience; they did so because they were then further demoralized, and humiliated, by the Gulf war, when for the first time in their history they were prevented from retaliating against attack and had to cower in their gas masks and sealed rooms behind the forces of others; they did so because a loud and articulate segment of their young people, unwilling to go on living under the conditions that their parents and grandparents had accepted as the price of statehood, seemed sure that there was no longer any good reason for those conditions to persist.[9]

I VERY much doubt that these were the things Rabin or Peres had consciously in mind in explaining to themselves their own conversions to a point of view they had always known to be false. Instead, each after his own character, they developed fancy rationalizations. Peres's I have already described, but Rabin's is harder to pin down because, unlike Peres, he never openly expressed it. Even so, on the basis of what I, as well as others more intimate with him, heard Rabin say in private, I would speculate that it had to do with his stress on the overriding importance of Israel's strategic relationship with the U.S.

Rabin persuaded himself, I would guess, that unless he endorsed Oslo and went to the White House lawn, he would jeopardize that relationship, and that this would prove more dangerous to Israel than a Palestinian state ruled by Arafat or a Syrian army on the whole of the Golan Heights. The Palestinians—and this, at least, is something he openly said—were not an "existential" threat to Israel; not so openly, he apparently also talked himself into the notion that he could remove the Syrians from the strategic equation merely by returning the Golan Heights to them.

Having accomplished this, he would be in a position to deal with the real threat which, in his view, now came from the missiles of Iraq and Iran. Meeting that threat, however, depended on continued access to the advanced weaponry from the U.S. without which Israel would wind up naked unto its most dangerous enemies. To please Washington thus became more urgent than any other consideration.

This theory puts the best possible face on a superficially realistic policy, but in my judgment it was based on the same illusion as Peres's fantasies of a new Middle East. Yes, Iraq and Iran—with their biological and chemical weapons and the missiles to deliver them—posed a new kind of threat to Israel, but that did not mean that the old threat was no longer there. Not even the threat from Egypt, the first—and at that point the only—Arab state to make peace with Israel, had entirely disappeared. Since the assassination of Sadat, the peace treaty he had signed with Israel at Camp David had held, but it had turned very "cold." Most of its provisions involving the normalization of relations between the two countries were being ignored or violated, and Egypt had gradually grown more and more hostile to Israel, even to the point of becoming the main center in the world for the dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. By now, it was not in the least certain that the piece of paper signed at Camp David would keep Egypt out of a new war with Israel if one should begin on some other front; Egyptian military exercises were even conducted on the assumption that Israel would be the enemy.

Then there was Jordan, which had not yet signed its own peace treaty with Israel before the assassination of Rabin but had been involved in much covert negotiation with the Jewish state for a long time. Yet these relatively warm relations did not prevent King Hussein from allying himself with Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war, or from permitting Iraqi Scuds aimed at Tel Aviv to fly over his territory, or even from helping to guide them on their way. And as the Scuds flew over their heads, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, climbing to the tops of their houses for a better view, danced and cheered them along.

[9] Here another bit of personal testimony may be useful. A few months before the Oslo agreement was signed but when the substance of it was already becoming known through leaks, I gave a talk in Jerusalem explaining why I believed that the "peace process" was a formula for war rather than peace. (The case I made was much the same as the one I would make in a series of pieces in COMMENTARY over the next months and years.) The audience was largely composed of academics and intellectuals who—being academics and intellectuals— were, of course, overwhelmingly in favor of the process, but from the intentness with which they listened to what I had to say, it was clear they were not as confident of their dovish position as they sometimes sounded. This impression was confirmed when the objections they raised during the question period turned out to be surprisingly few and mild. But what most surprised me was the statement made by a distinguished professor at the Hebrew University who was also a leading dove. "I agree with every word you say," he declared, "but unless we show that we are doing everything we can to make peace, our sons will jump out of their tanks when the next war comes."

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RABIN DID not live to see the second round of such dancing and cheering in 1998, when war between the U.S. and Iraq again seemed imminent and when the prospect of Israeli cities being flattened and Israeli citizens being gassed and poisoned delighted the hearts of the Palestinians—this, even after they had been involved in the "peace process" for nearly five years and even when nearly all of them were already living under the PLO. But if he never lived to see this especially disgusting and disabusing sight, Rabin did live to see all the rest, including the terrorist bombings that occurred after the handshake with Arafat on the White House lawn and that took more Israeli lives than had been lost in the previous ten years put together.

By then, however, it was too late for him to admit error or to change course. He had already pledged his political fortunes and his sacred honor—and even, as it would horribly turn out, his life as well—to that course, and he therefore took refuge in his rationalizations and willfully blinded himself to the abundantly contrary evidence. So, and to an even greater extent, did Peres, who succeeded him as Prime Minister after the assassination.

Still, it did not sit well with the more commonsensical Israeli public when Peres kept describing the terrorist bombings that followed in the wake of Oslo as blows against peace and the terrorists themselves as "enemies of peace." To most Israelis these terrorists were enemies not of peace but of the Jews; and the Jews who were being slaughtered by them were not "martyrs for peace" but victims of just the kind of terrorism that Oslo was supposed to have brought to an end. Which was why they voted against Peres and for Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister in 1995.

The Clinton administration did what it could to prevent this outcome, all but openly electioneering for Peres, who had smoothly moved into Rabin's old place in Bill Clinton's effusive affections. Clinton and his people also feared that Netanyahu—the young ideological heir to Begin and Shamir, and as such a critic of Oslo—would try to sabotage the "peace process." That is, he would find excuses for refusing to move with all deliberate speed toward the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state there with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Considering Netanyahu's background, and especially the writings he had published on terrorism and on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, this was not an unreasonable expectation. Rabin and Peres and their followers might have bought into the world's view of Israel as the main cause of this conflict, but Netanyahu most certainly had not. He still knew what they had all once known and then chosen to forget: that there could be no peace between Israel and the Arab world until the Arabs first made their own peace with the existence of a Jewish state and reconciled themselves to living alongside it.

Netanyahu also knew that Rabin had been wrong in his latter-day idea that the Palestinians were too weak to pose an "existential threat" to Israel. As he saw it, a Palestinian state would not exist in isolation. Rather than marking the end of the conflict, it would signal the beginning of a new stage in the war against Israel, a new *jihad*, into which all the other Arab states, and Iran along with them, would be drawn in a last desperate effort to rectify the political injustice against the Arabs and to undo the offense against Islam that the existence of Israel still represented in their eyes. There were various ways in which such a war might break out. But whichever of the possible scenarios were to be enacted, one large fact would remain constant among all the many variables: with a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria, the enemy lines would begin just east of the suburbs of Tel Aviv and stretch in one continuous swath all the way to Baghdad.

Yet reasonable though it seemed to expect an effort by Netanyahu to reverse Oslo, he did nothing of the kind. All he did was try to slow down the momentum a bit, and even for this minuscule shift, he was treated by the whole world, again including Washington, as though he were throwing the "peace process" entirely out the window. But his supporters on the Right, who had hoped for him to do just that, furiously assailed his performance as a betrayal of them and everything he had seemed to stand for in the past.

BOTH ACCUSATIONS were off the mark. My own interpretation, again based in part on direct knowledge and in part on inferences from that knowledge, was that Netanyahu was no less convinced than Rabin had been that Israel could not afford to alienate the U.S. and thereby jeopardize its access to the advanced military technology it would need to stave off or fight a war against Iraq and Iran. He therefore felt it necessary to keep the U.S. on board by committing himself to the fulfillment of Oslo.

But at the same time he also felt it necessary to show his core constituencies—and perhaps himself

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as well—that he could accomplish this feat without compromising Israel's security and without accepting a fully sovereign Palestinian state that would have its capital in Jerusalem. In trying to square this circle, he threw his old supporters an occasional bone, usually not very meaty and not much more than symbolic (such as opening a new exit to an archeological tunnel in west Jerusalem, or announcing the construction of a new Jewish housing development in east Jerusalem), either immediately before or immediately after taking another real step on the road mapped out by Oslo (such as withdrawing from Hebron).

Netanyahu's reward was the anger of all sides. His erstwhile backers on the Right denounced him for taking those steps and refused to be reassured by the gestures that were intended as a show (again both to them and to himself) of his determination to block a Palestinian state and the redivision of Jerusalem. Conversely, the Clinton administration, following the lead of the Palestinians and their Arab brothers, fell on his head like a ton of bricks whenever he made one of his symbolic gestures, while giving him hardly any credit at all for moving as far as he was doing in the very direction it wanted him to go.

So much, then, for the endlessly repeated claim that Bill Clinton was friendlier to Israel than any American President before him. There was no denying that this seemed true when Rabin and Peres had been in office. But in accepting the traditional American interpretation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and then going further in implementing its implications than even the least friendly of American Presidents had ever thought it prudent to insist on, Rabin and Peres had given Clinton a free ride. There was no need for him to exert unpleasant American pressures on Israel and there was no cause for friction. But with Netanyahu in office, a reversion to the pattern of the past took place in Washington—*even though* Netanyahu's policies, as opposed to some of his words, did not constitute a corresponding reversion to the realistic appraisal of Arab intentions that had always guided the Israelis in the past.

AND SO, as Israel arrives at its 50th birthday, its relations with the United States are still marked by complexity and ambiguity. America is still, and perhaps more than ever, the Jewish state's best friend among the nations. This has not consistently been the case, but it is close to a certainty that if not for U.S. help, Israel would not have survived to celebrate a half-century of national existence.

On the other hand, no more than the rest of the world has the American government yet been willing to face the truth about the Arab-Israeli conflict or to act upon it. Admittedly that truth became harder to grasp when, after 1967, the Arabs gave up saying in languages other than Arabic that their objective had never deviated from what it had been from the very beginning: to wipe the Jewish state off the map. Realizing that such honesty was politically counterproductive, they now claimed when addressing the West in English or French or German that all they wanted was the return of the territories seized by Israeli "aggression" in 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian state that would live in peace alongside its Jewish counterpart (precisely the solution they had violently rejected in 1948 after the Jews of Palestine had accepted it).

Yet Fouad Ajami of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, one of the few Arab scholars who has tried to tell the truth that the American government still cannot bring itself to face, informs us that "There has been no discernible change in the Arab attitudes toward Israel." On the contrary, he writes,

> The great refusal persists . . . in that "Arab street" of ordinary men and women, among the intellectuals and the writers, and in the professional syndicates. The force of this refusal can be seen in the press of the governments and of the oppositionists, among the secularists and the Islamists alike, in countries that have concluded diplomatic agreements with Israel and those that haven't.

According to Ajami, indeed, the great refusal "remains fiercest in Egypt," where opposition to Israel "has become part of the ethos and the ideology of the state" as well as of "the gatekeepers of Egyptian culture [who] remain unalterably opposed to normal traffic with Israel."

This assessment has been seconded by no less fervent a believer in the conventional wisdom about the sources of the Arab-Israeli conflict and no less passionate a supporter of Palestinian statehood than the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman. In a report written about a year ago from Casablanca, Friedman acknowledged that "Up to now the Arab intellectual Left, as well as the unions of Arab doctors, lawyers, and writers, have refused to reconcile themselves to Israel, even though their regimes have." Even in Morocco, the supposedly least anti-Israel of those regimes, Friedman "heard attacks on Israel that were so bitter I finally said to

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them: 'I feel as if I've entered a time warp and woken up at an Arab League meeting in 1960.'"[10]

But there is no longer any need to rely on second-hand accounts, even from courageous and trustworthy scholars like Ajami, to find out what the Arabs say when they are speaking to one another in Arabic. For some months now, an organization called MEMRI (Middle East Media Research Institute) has been translating articles from the Arabic press and sending them by e-mail or fax—free of charge and without editorial comment—to anyone who asks to be put on the list.[11] These articles, with rare exceptions, are so filled with hate of Israel and of Jews, and so deeply cemented into the "great refusal," that no reader who is exposed even to a few days' worth of selections could come away believing that the change of heart in the Arab world toward Israel that is the necessary precondition of peace has as yet even remotely begun to manifest itself.

No Middle East policy can succeed if it refuses to accept this reality. On the contrary, by dismissing it from sight and acting as though the preconditions for a peaceful settlement were already present, the U.S.—in tandem with the other nations of the world who are not friends of Israel—has done unwitting harm. Because the U.S. is so great a friend, and because Israel does depend on Washington for the weapons it needs to deter and/or defend itself from attack, Israeli leaders have felt obliged to accept, or pretend to accept, or talk themselves into accepting, the American view that they virtually have it in their unilateral power to end the war the Arabs have been waging against their state for the past 50 years.

In yielding to that view, Israel has been forced onto a path that has hardly any chance of leading to peace but is likely to wind its cruelly devious way into another major military outbreak. And if that should happen, the conventional weapons of the past—tanks and planes and infantry—might well be supplemented by the unconventional weapons of the present and the future—missiles armed with biological and chemical warheads coming from Iraq and Iran and answered by missiles armed with nuclear warheads coming from the Israelis.

Is there nothing the American government can do to avert this apocalyptic eventuality that it has unwittingly been helping to bring about? There is. The first step is to stop fooling itself about the readiness of the Palestinians in particular and the Arab world in general to make peace with Israel. If it were to take this step, it would immediately perceive the futility of its present policy of pressing the Israelis to make more and more concessions to the Palestinians. For example, it would recognize the sheer absurdity of sitting around with a map and trying to figure out if a withdrawal from another 13.1 percent of the territories still occupied by the Israeli army would have any more effect on the prospects for peace than one of 9.2 or 8.6 percent.

Most of all, the U.S. would be ready to understand that the only true hope of peace lies in the modernization and democratization of the Arab world. I for one do not doubt that this will happen some day: why should the Arabs be forever exempt from the forces that are affecting everyone else on this earth? I also have no doubt that when it finally does happen, a peaceful settlement with Israel will be as easy for the Arabs to achieve as it is impossible for them to contemplate in their present political and social condition.

It follows that what the United States should do is everything it can to encourage the introduction, where still necessary, and the spread, where it has become possible, of those modernizing and democratizing forces in the Middle East. This is a policy entirely consistent with and congenial to the American spirit, and one that we have been trying to pursue in other parts of the world. Yet we have on the whole excepted the Middle East from such benign ministrations. Rarely if ever do we talk about human rights in Saudi Arabia or complain about the suppression of political liberty everywhere else in the region, including even countries like Syria where there is no oil to worry about.

In any event, having learned from our experience of the 1970's that the "oil weapon" is not so easy for the Arabs to use or so effective as we had once feared it would be, why should we not begin doing in the Middle East what we have been attempting to do in Eastern Europe? If we did, we would be giving Israel the most appropriate 50th-birthday present imaginable. And we would also be helping the Arab peoples of the region to live better lives, instead of traveling by their side on a course that is bound to end with untold numbers of them, along with many thousand of Israelis, dying horrible deaths in another and even bloodier war than the five that have already been fought.

[10] This experience did not shake Friedman's prior conviction that the Arab world was ready to accept Israel; all it did was elicit an exhortation from him to the Moroccans who were making such statements to bring themselves up to date and get with the program.

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The Disaffections of American Jews

Jack Wertheimer

In the months leading up to Israel's 50th anniversary, an impatient if not downright surly tone came to permeate public discussion about the Jewish state within the American Jewish community. The Jewish press—mirroring the general media in this respect—was filled with stories about Israel's "failings": its practice of discrimination against Israeli Arabs, especially in housing; the disarray in its secret-intelligence agencies, as evidenced by botched operations in Jordan and elsewhere; its responsibility for the slow progress of negotiations with the Palestinians; and especially its inability or unwillingness to resolve the contentious matter of domestic "pluralism," meaning the relationship between religion and state.

Within the organizational world of American Jewry, agencies that had once vied for the distinction of being Israel's staunchest supporter now seriously debated whether their proper task should not be to sway the U.S. government toward a more assertive role in Middle East negotiations—including by applying pressure on Israel to make concessions. In order to rectify perceived weaknesses in Israeli domestic arrangements, some groups advocated the export to the Jewish state of American models of democracy, pluralism, and church-state separation. This, according to the executive of one such group, would "enable people to love Israel, and to honor it, not just because it exists, but because of what it is"—something evidently not possible under current circumstances. Meanwhile, there was much worried talk about declines in Israel-directed philanthropy and in levels of support for pro-Israel lobbying groups; although (as it happens) no such declines have occurred, quite a number of observers seemed to believe that, given Israel's numerous shortcomings, they ought to have.

The prevailing mood in the organized community was perfectly captured—and further encouraged—by a widely reprinted article entitled, "For All Our Flaws," by an Israeli journalist of American origin. Quoting the words of a fund-raiser to the effect that American Jews are "too upset with Israel these days," the author pleaded for understanding—"We aren't the heroes we once seemed to be, but maybe, one day, we will be again"—and ended by beseeching American Jews, "for your own sake as well as ours, . . . to keep loving Israel despite its glaring flaws."

One would, of course, be hard-pressed to reconcile all this hand-wringing with the actual accomplishments of the Jewish state during its first half-century. Established by visionaries convinced that the Land of Israel must once again become what it was in ancient times—the vital center of Jewish life—Israel will soon surpass the United States as the largest Jewish population center in the world.

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It has grown primarily through the ingathering of Jews from the far reaches of the globe, an astonishingly successful process that has required herculean efforts to absorb and integrate diverse people. A society of recent immigrants, many if not most of whom arrived pauperized and suffering in varying degrees the traumas of persecution, Israel has created a dynamic, high-tech, $100-billion-a-year economy that generates a per-capita income rivaling that of several European nations. Simultaneously, Israelis have spearheaded a renaissance of Jewish culture—reviving Hebrew as a spoken language, creating a modern literature and new styles of art, music, dance, and other forms of cultural expression that have enriched the world.

In brief, anyone considering what the first Zionists set out to achieve just 100 years ago and comparing it with the record today would have to conclude that what was called for on the part of American Jews was nothing less than ardent thanksgiving and joyous celebration. That this has not been the case may tell us less about Israel and its true accomplishments as a Jewish commonwealth than about the current condition of some of its self-declared supporters.

IT WOULD be misleading, however, to suggest that the current chilliness is unprecedented. For the fact is that American Jews have long had a conflicted relationship with the Zionist enterprise. According to one apocryphal story, an American rabbi at the turn of the century, asked whether there were any Zionists in America, responded, "Yes, there are two. A madman named Stephen S. Wise and a madwoman named Henrietta Szold." Until the desperate plight of European Jewry during the Nazi era demonstrated the vital need for a Jewish haven of refuge, American Zionism attracted only a small following. And even as late as 1948, membership in the various Zionist organizations in the United States amounted to only a fifth of the country's Jewish population.

American Zionists historically defined their cause in philanthropic rather than political terms. Although they themselves were in no need of rescue, they saw their support of the settlement in Palestine as an act of solidarity with their fellow Jews, many of whom—just like the original settlers of the United States—had been the victims of religious persecution elsewhere. Writing in 1915, Louis D. Brandeis, the most prominent Zionist leader of the time and in due course to be appointed to the Supreme Court by Woodrow Wilson, directly linked the Zionist enterprise to the colonization of North America, describing the early *halutzim* (pioneers) as "Jewish Pilgrim Fathers" who endured "the physical hardships to which the life of a pioneer is necessarily subjected."

This was not, to be sure, the only vision of the Zionist project. A small number of intellectuals in America saw the movement less in philanthropic terms than as an instrument of Jewish cultural regeneration. Writing some 90 years ago, one of the leading exponents of this trend, Solomon Schechter, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, urged that Zionism be judged not "by what it has accomplished *in* Zion and Jerusalem . . . but by what it has thus far achieved *for* Zion and Jerusalem, through the awakening of a national Jewish consciousness." For Schechter and his circle, the Zionist cause would in particular enable Jews everywhere to withstand the challenges posed by modernity to their religious civilization and identity.

It took the Nazi catastrophe to propel American Zionists to embrace an openly political goal for their movement. The needs of homeless Jews required immediate attention, and in the years leading up to statehood American Jews began to raise ever larger sums of money toward that end, while also lobbying the U.S. government to recognize the fledgling state. But once Israel was established, and the immediate crisis passed, a period of relative quiescence set in once again; funds were raised, and lobbyists organized themselves, but Zionism and Israel were relegated to a minor place in American Jewish consciousness. According to the most probing sociological analysis of American Jewish life in the 1950's, Marshall Sklare's "Lakeville" study, Israel barely registered in the concerns of America's rapidly suburbanizing and upwardly mobile Jews.

In fact, surprising as it may seem, it was not until Israel was in mortal danger on the eve of the Six-Day War in 1967, and then was almost overrun six years later in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, that large numbers of American Jews were captivated by developments in the Jewish state. It was in these years that Israel became, in the view of the sociologist Nathan Glazer, the "religion" of American Jews. Writing in the *New York Times* in July 1974, Norman Podhoretz could declare, without hyperbole, that "ever since . . . the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, it has become clearer and clearer that something new has happened to the Jews of America; they have all been converted to Zionism." And yet the very title of Podhoretz's essay, "Now, Instant Zionism," underscored the possibly ephemeral nature of this development: one that marked, for

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American Jews, a rather recent departure from a history made up of some anti-Zionism and a great deal of non-Zionism or "indifferentism."

TODAY, two-and-a-half decades later, the deep concern for Israel and its people that was so vividly on display in 1974 seems once again to have given way to "indifferentism" and worse. The regression can be tracked in a series of annual opinion surveys conducted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC). Between 1993 and 1997, asked "how close do you feel to Israel?," the number of Jews responding "very close" has declined while the number of those claiming to feel "very distant" has risen. An even more precipitous decline has occurred in the attachments of younger American Jews. In his analysis of the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, the sociologist Chaim Waxman found that whereas almost half of older American Jews felt very or extremely attached to Israel, not even 30 percent of baby-boomers felt such strong ties. This trend was confirmed in the 1997 AJC study, in which Jews over the age of sixty tended to report feeling close to Israel while those under forty were most apt to feel either fairly or very distant.

The sociologist Steven M. Cohen has probed these attitudes further. In a forthcoming study, he reports that only 52 percent of his respondents agree with the statement that "Israel is critical in sustaining American Jewish life." On the basis of his analysis, Cohen concludes that "Israel can be termed very important to only about a fifth to a quarter of American Jews; it is of little importance to about a third of the population; and of intermediate importance to just under half of American Jewry."*

Attitudes are reflected in actions. Most surveys indicate that, at most, a third of American Jews have traveled to Israel even once. Here again baby-boomers score significantly lower than their elders, and the disparity cannot be ascribed to the costs of international travel. Thus, during the academic year 1995-96, anywhere between 14,000 and 22,000 American Jewish university students were attending schools abroad, but only 1,667 were enrolled in study programs at Israeli universities—itself a big decline since the early 90's. (This does not include the 3,000 American Jews enrolled in Orthodox yeshivas in Israel.)

In recent years, Jewish communal funds have been established to help young Jews travel to Israel. One such program in New York offers free round-trip airfare annually to as many as 300 college students who wish to visit Israel for the first time. But finding takers proved to be so difficult that a survey was done to learn why. Of those students who were intending to go elsewhere than Israel, almost all pleaded poverty, despite the fact that they would have been given a free ticket. Some expressed fear: as one of them put it, "I don't go to Bosnia, and I don't go to Israel." Still others confessed to a different anxiety altogether: a trip to Israel "might be 'transformative,'" leading them to become "too Jewish."

And here we come to the nub of the matter: the attachment of Jews to Israel cannot be understood in isolation from other forms of Jewish engagement. In the 1997 AJC survey, those respondents who thought that being Jewish was unimportant were also likely to feel distant from Israel; not unexpectedly, the converse also held true. Denominational affiliation—a measure of Jewish religious involvement—is another reliable indicator: in the AJC survey, 38 percent of Reform Jews and half of those who eschewed any religious label reported feeling distant from Israel, as compared with 15 percent of Conservative Jews and only 4 percent of Orthodox Jews. A similar gap separated Jews who have married out from the in-married.

In short, the disengagement of one large sector of American Jewry from Israel is clearly an extension of a growing indifference to all things Jewish, and especially to an identification with the Jewish people.

These findings put the lie to a whole series of rationalizations that has been advanced to explain the growing disenchantment with Israel. In the early 1980's, for example, some observers traced signs of disaffection to the coming to power in Israel of the Likud coalition in 1977; later, it was Israel's handling of the *intifada* that was faulted; more recently, it was the election of Benjamin Netanyahu; and now, according to one journalist, "the growing indifference to and alienation of large parts of American Jewry from Israel" are to be ascribed to the "wars" over religious pluralism in the Jewish state.

The truth is otherwise: the intensity of disaffection is related in only minor ways to particular actions by Israel or particular policies of particular Israeli governments. Even in the wake of the Oslo accords, and before the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin—in other words, in a period of relative euphoria over the prospects of peace in the Middle East—surveys indicated an ongoing detachment

* I am grateful for permission to cite these data from Cohen's study, "Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: The 1997 Heller-JCCA National Survey of American Jews," which was sponsored by the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America and will appear next fall. A recent study in Great Britain found a similar division among Anglo-Jewry, albeit with somewhat higher overall rates of positive identification.

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from Israel. After studying the matter, the political scientist Charles Liebman concluded: "Neither dovish nor hawkish policies, the controversies over 'who is a Jew?,' or even the recent conversion controversy seem to have major effects on the decline in the identity which American Jews feel for Israel."

DOES THIS suggest, then, that what Israel is or does has no impact on American Jewish attitudes—that the country is nothing more than a screen on which American Jews project their own sense of themselves as Jews? Clearly that is not the whole story, either. One factor accelerating the rift between the two communities is that, culturally speaking, they tread divergent paths, and in some ways have come to inhabit quite disparate worlds.*

Simply put, the oft-invoked slogan of the United Jewish Appeal—"We Are One"—has grown increasingly hollow. To take the most obvious difference in the situation of the two communities—and hence in the nature of their Jewish consciousness—American Jews live as a minority in a multicultural society that has become progressively more tolerant, perhaps especially of Jews; by contrast, Israeli Jews live as a majority that must cope with minorities living within the state's borders, some of them hostile to the very existence of the Jewish state. Again, American Jews live in a voluntary society where their every act of engagement as Jews is a matter of choice; Jews in Israel, as members of a Jewish polity, are compelled by law and custom to participate in communal Jewish activities, whether they be performing military service, paying taxes to support the Jewish state, or obtaining state sanction for their marriages through the officiation of rabbis.

Given these disparate settings, it is hardly surprising that each Jewry also constructs its Jewish identity in a distinctive way. American values inform the thinking of Jews in the United States, so much so that even quintessentially Jewish rituals and observances have been redefined here in "universal" terms. Passover, for example, is not merely the holiday of Jewish redemption but has been reconceived as a journey to freedom analogous to the emancipation of blacks from slavery and women from "patriarchy." In line with American Protestantism, Judaism itself has been reinterpreted as essentially a matter of ethical behavior; according to survey data, American Jews overwhelmingly believe that "a Jew can be religious even if he or she is not particularly observant." Judaism in this country is also deeply affected by the powerful strains of individualism that permeate the American ethos. Many American Jews have so internalized this ethos that they see nothing wrong with embracing only those religious activities they find personally meaningful. As a consequence, some forms of institutional Judaism self-consciously strive to offer a "smorgasbord" of options, inviting their adherents to select as they see fit from an *à la carte* menu of beliefs and practices.

One need hardly point out that in Israel things are otherwise. Israelis live in a cultural ambience in which Hebrew is the common tongue, the Jewish calendar regulates the passage of time, and the land on which they reside is a constant physical reminder of the Jewish past. Participation in the life of the group is governed by an almost instinctive feeling of connectedness: when soldiers are wounded or killed, the nation grieves; when a lone individual commits a dastardly act, the nation is thrown into introspection and self-doubt. This identification with the Jewish family of Israel is reinforced by a deep suspicion about the intentions of non-Jews: as compared with their American counterparts, Israeli Jews tend to be far warier of Gentiles and to view the world as a more hostile place.

No less significantly, Israelis tend to be culturally and socially more conservative than American Jews. Their attitudes toward sexuality, women's roles, and family structure are out of step with current American mores. Religion for them is still a package deal, and they either accept or reject the legitimacy of Judaism as it is defined by the Orthodox, showing little appreciation for non-Orthodox religious movements.

IN MOMENTS of adversity, it is true, these cultural disparities have been bridged by a number of countervailing commonalities. In crisis and war, American Jews have repeatedly rallied to the banner of philanthropic Zionism, offering financial support and lobbying muscle. Despite cultural distance, moreover, American Jews are habitually sensitive to coreligionists in need; as recently as the early 90's, a special campaign raised $1 billion to help resettle Jews from former Soviet lands in Israel.

But these commonalities, too, have come under assault in the last years, and in part from an unexpected direction. As Israel has become economically more self-sufficient, some Israelis have taken to denigrating the importance of American Jewish help, and have even urged American Jews to mind their own business. Israel's president, Ezer Weizman, has repeatedly told visiting delegations from

* For a helpful discussion of this theme, see Charles S. Liebman and Steven M. Cohen, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences* (Yale, 1990).

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America that they should spend their money on Jewish education at home; Israel, he has said, is only interested in the immigrants that American Jews are prepared to send. Although these messages have been pooh-poohed by their recipients, they have also worked subtly to dissolve some very strong bonds.

Israeli intellectuals have likewise contributed to the process of dissolution. The noted writer A.B. Yehoshua, for example, has urged American Jews to abandon their loyalties to Israel altogether: "If you have extra money, please give it to alleviate the conditions of deprived groups in America—this is where your responsibility lies." Other Israeli intellectuals have made it plain that they are bored with the very notion of a common Jewish culture. At a "Global Conversation on Writing and the Jewish Future" held in California this past February, the novelist Orly Castel-Bloom lamented that "all this Jewish-Jewish-Jewish stuff oppresses me," and confided her "dream" that "Jews . . . will find a way to get rid of that . . . obligation of Judaism that produces nothing but paralyzing guilt-feelings and shame." Understandably, a journalist covering the conference came away convinced that Israeli and Diaspora Jews "represent two people, joined by a common history but divided by language, culture, and even religion."

FINALLY, ONE must add another catalyzing ingredient: the relentless barrage of attacks on the Jewish state that has been mounted in recent years by some highly vocal American Jews, aided and abetted by their Israeli counterparts. These critics not only voice misgivings about specific policies of the Israeli government. They castigate Israel itself as an essentially immoral and undemocratic enterprise. Their drumbeat began in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, and intensified sharply during the *intifada*; but what went before has paled in comparison with the tone of calumny and high indignation that has characterized this campaign since the election of Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996.

For a taste of what is involved, one need look no further than a symposium on Israel's 50th anniversary in a recent issue of *Tikkun*. Virtually every American Jewish contributor to this "compassionately critical analysis" (as it styles itself) registers shocked dismay at the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of the Jewish state. According to one, young American Jews are "appalled by the lack of moral sensitivity, the racism, and the absence [in Israel] of any larger spiritual vision beyond 'making it' in the international capitalist market." To another, "neither Labor nor Likud" holds out the hope of a truly "generous peace" with the Palestinian Arabs, for "to make such a peace is today beyond Israel's moral capacity." A third chastises Israel (and Jews generally) for having lost "their moral compass." As for the Israeli contributors to this symposium, they tend to be at least as bilious as their American colleagues.

In constructing his taxonomy of American Jewish "indifferentism" a quarter-century ago, Norman Podhoretz pointed in particular to three groups: socialists who had no patience for the "reactionary bourgeois nationalism" of the Zionists and who fervently believed that universalism would triumph over narrow national concerns; upper-class Jews of German extraction, some of them affiliated with classical Reform Judaism, who defined their Jewish identity as a matter of religious confession and viewed talk of Jewish peoplehood as antithetical to the goal of integration and social acceptance in America, if not to the "prophetic" vocation of the Jews; and Jewish intellectuals, "very few of whom," as Podhoretz put it, "ever found anything to interest or attract them either in the idea of Jewish statehood or in the concrete existence of the state of Israel."

It is uncanny how faithfully some of these old themes of Jewish anti-Zionism have resurfaced. "The outlook of Reform Judaism is the world, the outlook of Zionism is a corner of Western Asia," intoned David Phillipson, the dean of the American Reform rabbinate, in 1942. Echoes one contributor to the *Tikkun* symposium: "[A]lmost everything fresh and new in [Judaism] is coming from the Diaspora, not Israel. . . .Where Israel had once given birth to prophets, it now produces clerks." Similarly, yesteryear's high-blown rhetoric of religious and social universalism lives on in today's grandiose visions of a future when, to quote another *Tikkun* writer, "chauvinistic consciousness" will pass from the earth and "issues of national sovereignty will be replaced with a global consciousness that allows us to recognize ourselves and God in each other." If there is a difference between then and now, it is that today's castigators are the more unctuously self-righteous, professing to care *so much* for Israel that they want to rescue it from itself. That aside, what has gone around has come around, with a vengeance.

GIVEN THE dimensions of the rift between American and Israeli Jews, it would be myopic to believe that we are likely to see a serious effort any time soon to bridge it. But it would also be

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wrong to end without noting the rays of light in the general gloom. For the fact is that whatever the disaffected are doing, and whatever the intellectuals are doing, those American Jews who do remain strongly affiliated with Jewish life are hardly turning away from the Jewish state. Philanthropic giving to Israel is still very high, and a survey by the American Jewish Committee in early 1998 found that a majority of American Jews not only support the Netanyahu government's handling of negotiations with the Arabs but—strikingly—*reject* the publicly expressed views of some Jewish leaders that the U.S. government should apply pressure on Israel.

For anyone who cares to look, there is also abundant evidence of the extent to which, cultural differences notwithstanding, the institutional life of American Jews, especially in its religious aspects, has become indelibly stamped by Israeli outlooks and practices. Most synagogue-going Jews pronounce their prayers in Israeli Hebrew, listen and sing along to Israeli liturgical compositions, and wear or use religious articles imported from the Jewish state. Israel figures as a central item in the curricula of all Jewish schools; and most of those schools are heavily dependent upon Israeli-born teachers or Americans educated at Israeli institutions. Every reputable rabbinical seminary in the United States requires its students to spend a year of study in Israel, and that year has a radiating effect both on them and on their subsequent ministries. Indeed, most American Jews who study in Israel, far from becoming alienated by this nation of "clerks," return with quite the opposite problem: in the words of one observer, "there seems simply no one [back home] with whom to share, or with whom to make sense out of, the profound awakenings they had begun to feel in Israel."

In all these respects and more, Israel has indeed wrought what Solomon Schechter prayed for, a recreation of the Jewish national consciousness not only *in* Zion but *for* Zion. And for this reason, if not for its numberless other astounding achievements and its sometimes disconcerting vibrancy, there is everything for American Jews to give thanks for and to celebrate on the occasion of Israel's 50th anniversary—just as there are, in addition, very real and powerful grounds for worry over the state's security and future well-being. But as for the widespread, glum refusal to credit the reality of what Israel has done for the Jews, that needs to be characterized in different terms. Shall we call it, perhaps, a sin?

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The Jewish State and the Jewish People(s)

Hillel Halkin

Is the Jewish people, 50 years after the establishment of its state, about to become the Jewish peoples?

History may be an inadequate basis for predicting the future, but, being the sum of our experience up to the future, it is all we have to go on. And so, thinking of the charges of destroying Jewish unity now being hurled at each other by the Orthodox and Reform (and, to a lesser extent, Conservative) rabbinates and their supporters over the who-is-or-who-can-become-a-Jew-in-Israel debate, I recently found myself asking a second, historical question. Given Orthodoxy's profound abhorrence of Reform Judaism from the outset, why, I wondered, did it not read Reform out of the Jewish fold when it first appeared on the scene in early 19th-century Germany?

Precedent would not have been lacking for such a step. On the contrary: it was close at hand. In the summer of 1781 an assembly of Jews in the town of Zelva, today in western Belarus near the Polish and Lithuanian borders, gathered to hear local rabbis read a ban on a new sect that called its members "Hasidim." After violently denouncing the sectaries, the ban enjoined the listeners and all other Jews, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, "to bar them [the Hasidim] from public prayer; deny them lodging; abstain from eating of their ritual slaughtering; transact no business with them; make no marriages with them; and refuse them a Jewish burial."

This excommunication—for such in effect it was—was a more explicitly worded version of a proclamation delivered that same summer by the great rabbinic scholar, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-97), under whose influence Lithuania had become the center of the "misnagdic" or anti-hasidic campaign. (An earlier prohibition on fraternizing, with the Hasidim had already been issued by the Gaon in 1772.) Itself framed in the sharpest of terms, the Vilna proclamation called on all Jews

> to ally themselves . . . against those who have publicly profaned the name of the Lord; exclude and isolate them in all possible ways; banish them from the boundaries of the community of Israel . . . and prevent them from congregating as is their wont and practicing their abominations until they hearken and accept all the commandments, injunctions, and circumventions placed upon them by the sages of our age.

From Lithuania the ban spread to eastern Poland, western Russia, Galicia, and other regions; in some places, Hasidim were attacked physically

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and forcibly driven from synagogues and communities. A renewed drive against them in 1796-98 led to the arrest and imprisonment of the hasidic master, Rabbi Shneour Zalman of Lyadi (1745-1813), on a trumped-up charge of plotting against the Russian government. Only with Shneour Zalman's release, which was followed by an 1804 czarist edict granting the Hasidim full freedom of worship, and with the passing of the spiritual leadership of Lithuanian Jewry to the more moderate Rabbi Haim of Volozhin (1749-1821), did the threat of a full-fledged schism within East European Jewry abate. Even then the rift closed slowly. For the next century or more, Hasidim and Misnagdim lived in parallel societies, rarely praying or performing rituals together, intermarrying infrequently, and socializing little.

AND WHAT were the doctrinal issues that led to this near schism? According to the 1772 ban, the most serious charges against the Hasidim were that they "form prayer groups among themselves, . . . shout the *shemoneh esreh* prayer aloud, act wildly, claim that their thoughts ascend to the highest heavens, . . . make light of study, . . . and make strange noises when they pray, so that their prayers are like a town square." The Hasidim were also castigated for using the Sephardi rather than the Ashkenazi prayer book; sharpening their slaughtering knives by untraditional methods; and—although this was not particularly stressed in the early struggle against them—putting their faith in charismatic wonder-workers.

One can imagine, then, what the rabbinic reaction must have been to Reform, the new religion of "Germans of the Mosaic faith," even the more moderate wing of which soon repudiated the authority of the Talmud, did away with prayer in Hebrew, and deleted all references to Zion and the messiah from its liturgy. But one would be wrong. Apart from heaping invective upon it, nowhere did Orthodoxy deal with Reform as the Vilna Gaon had dealt with Hasidism. Not even the decision of the radical Reformists to eliminate circumcision and redeploy the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday provoked such an action. Reform Judaism was allowed to go its parallel way from the start.

This puzzle has its explanations. Hasidism's rabbinic opponents overreacted both because they correctly perceived it as an immediate threat to their authority and because they incorrectly associated it with the 17th-century false-messianic movement of Sabbatianism, the traumatic effects of which on Jewish life had not yet faded away. Reform, on the other hand, never took root in Eastern Europe, where Orthodoxy was strongest; was rarely in direct competition with it, since those Jews who joined it had generally deserted the Orthodox camp beforehand and were not vulnerable to Orthodox sanctions; and enjoyed the benefit of the rabbinic principle of *yisra'el af-al-pi she-hata yisra'el hu*, "a Jew remains a Jew despite his sins." Even in America, until well after World War II, the legal or *halakhic* Jewishness of Reform congregants was not, from the Orthodox point of view, in question. In the unlikely eventuality of parallel lines meeting, Reform Jews could be married and included in Jewish rituals.

But the non-anathematization of Reform may have stemmed from a deeper historical disposition, too. For, short-lived though it was, it was the ban on Hasidism that was the anomaly. Indeed, when one looks at each of the great religious schisms that actually took place in the Jewish past, one observes that the Jewish establishment of its day, and of many years and even centuries afterward, was generally reluctant to press things to the breaking point.

This was true of the first such break, the 5th-century B.C.E. split with the Samaritans, who were unequivocally declared non-Jews by the rabbis only 800 years later. It was true of the rupture with Christianity, which parted ways with Judaism before Judaism parted ways with it. It was true of the 9th-century C.E. breach with Karaism that never passed the point of no return; although the *halakhic* status of the Karaites remained ambiguous in Jewish law for a millennium, the Israeli rabbinate has ruled that the small number of them living in Israel today are Jewish in every respect. It was true of the Sabbatians, the great majority of whom never left, or quietly rejoined, Jewish ranks. And it was true of renegades like Iberian *conversos* in the 15th and 16th centuries and assimilated Jews of later times who, when choosing to return, were usually welcomed back with no questions asked.

As a rule, Jews have been quick to quarrel with each other and extremely slow to cut their ties beyond repair. On the basis of the evidence, one might speculate that, of their four-ply connection to each other—religious, ethno-cultural, political, and biological—all four strands must be badly frayed for the breaking point to be reached. One might even, indulging in a bit of pseudo-sociological whimsy, attempt to quantify that breaking point—putting it, say, at 0.8 or below on a four-point scale of connectedness.

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With Reform, it was not the religious strand that snapped first. The cultural one had preceded it: even before the new movement's emergence, freshly emancipated German Jews inhabited a material and mental universe vastly different from that of a Jew in Vilna or in Zelva. Then came the severing of the political link. Not only was Reform's bourgeois liberalism sharply at odds with the sentiments of East European rabbis, but, as the century progressed, its German patriotism and fierce opposition to both Zionism and Diaspora Jewish nationalism—to international Jewish solidarity of almost any kind—estranged it from East European Jewry even more. Among the four strands, the biological link of Jewish endogamy alone remained intact between the two communities.

At bottom, then, may not the current dispute over non-Orthodox conversions in Israel be simply an expression of the fact that this final, biological link is now belatedly giving way as well? For, to put the case differently, Reform Judaism, once a last sociological barrier before the exit point from Jewish life, has become in recent decades a point of entry as well. For the first time in modern history, significant numbers of Gentiles, particularly in the United States, are seeking to become Jews, their route of preference being a Reform conversion whose validity Orthodox Jews reject. Combined with Reform's acceptance of unconverted Gentile congregants and its un-*halakhic* recognition of patrilineal Jewish descent, the result is a growing number of Reform Jews who are no longer even in theory endogamous with Orthodox ones.

This does not mean that Reform is about to go the way of Samaritanism or Karaism. Even were our four-ply model correct, certain Jewish bonds can strengthen as others weaken—the political one, for instance, which during the present century has gradually brought the Reform movement around to an active participation in collective Jewish affairs and a positive identification with its old bugbear of Zionism. And in any case, our model is not correct.

ONE OBVIOUS reason why it is not is its unipolarity, which posits a particular form, *x*, of Jewish life—the Second Temple society of Judea, or the medieval Geonic Judaism of Babylonia, or the 18th-century Misnagdism of Eastern Europe—as a universal norm against which deviations *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d* are to be measured. In reality, however, no such Jewish norm has ever existed, and it is not only *x* but also *a* that must be compared with *b* and *c*, just as *b* must be compared with *c*, *c* with *d*, and so forth. It is not enough, that is, to observe that the Reform Jew in Berlin and the Orthodox Jew in Vilna were culturally far apart; one must add that the same Reform Jew and his Orthodox Jewish neighbor on the Spandaustrasse or the Friedrichstrasse may have been culturally quite close.

Or look at the 500-year period of the Geonim, stretching roughly from the 6th to the 11th centuries, in which centralized rabbinic authority, exercised by the Babylonian exilarchate and the heads of the great Babylonian yeshivas, reached a peak never previously or subsequently attained. Apart from the Karaites, who rejected this authority entirely, Jewish communities only partially or not at all subject to it included such other groups living under Islam as the Maghariyyans, who may have been related to the Dead Sea Scroll sectaries, and the Isawiyyas of Persia, who believed that Jesus and Muhammad were true prophets; the Jews of Spain, about to embark on their golden age; the new Ashkenazi Jewry of France and the Rhineland; the mysterious Jewish kingdom of Khazaria; and remote and isolated Jewish communities like the Falashas of Ethiopia and the Bene Israel of India. And while the overall correlation of Isawiyyism with Geonic Judaism, for example, may have been 1.8 on a four-point scale, the correlation may have dropped to 0.7 with Ashkenazi Jewry and risen to 2.5 with Karaism. Furthermore, while, in a conflict like the one between the "Rabbanites" and the Karaites, it is the winners who appear to us in historical retrospect the "real Jews" and the losers the doomed defectors, we must not forget that the losers once were sure that the eventual winners and real Jews were themselves.

In a word, the Jewish people has always been an aggregate, geographically dispersed and linguistically and culturally diverse; some parts of it closer to one another than other parts; some mediating among other parts; many holding different beliefs, practicing different rituals, and impelled by different social and economic interests; few connected to or divided from the rest by the identical things; most aiding one another in some areas while competing in others and more or less living and letting live—which, the Jews being everywhere a minority without the coercive means of government or established church, was something they had little choice about. The very notion of what was or who was a Jew was never anything but relative. Were the Isawiyyas Jews? For a Karaite, probably; for a Jew of Ashkenaz (had he heard of them), probably not.

Jewish unity cannot be destroyed because it never existed: such is the lesson of Jewish history.

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II

SO WHAT else, one might ask, is new? The *illusion* of Jewish unity, it would seem.

But is it? Jews in the past had this illusion, too. A Jew in 9th-century Baghdad or 12th-century Cordoba knew the Judaism of Baghdad or of Cordoba; if he thought about Jews elsewhere, he imagined them to be like himself. The occasional traveler may have brought tales of distant and exotic Jews elsewhere, but these were forgotten or transformed into legend, into lost tribes beyond the mountains of darkness and the river Sambatyon. The real Jew was the familiar one.

To be accurate, moreover, it is rather the sense of Jewish unity in our own time that has not been entirely an illusion. Compared with most, perhaps even all, of the Jewish past, and especially with the first half of this century, the last 50 years have witnessed an unusual degree of solidarity. There has been enough time to get used to this condition and even to come to regard it as normal.

Two things have created it: the Holocaust and the state of Israel. And it is Israel especially that has been the focal point of Jewish unity in our time. But it has also become the foundering point, since while Jewish communities can live peacefully side by side with differing standards of Jewishness, it is impossible to administer a Jewish state without a single standard, and no such criterion can be agreed upon. Nor would it be workable if it could.

Let us suppose for a moment that, by government decision or (as is more likely) court order, Reform and Conservative Judaism were to be fully enfranchised in Israel tomorrow. Assuming that the synagogue-state relationship in Israel remained otherwise unchanged, this would enable non-Orthodox rabbis to perform officially recognized conversions, marriages, and divorces; to serve as chaplains in the armed forces, hospitals, and prisons; to receive a share of government funds for salaries, religious schools, and synagogues; and to participate in the local religious councils that are responsible for channeling and supervising such allocations. Would this be an equitable or convenient solution for all Israelis? For all Jews? For all Gentiles wishing to become Jews?

It would not be. To begin with, the approximately one million Orthodox Jews of Israel would no longer be able to rely on official records of Jewishness. They would have to stop automatically thinking of their fellow Israelis as fellow Jews, privately investigate the family trees of prospective marriage partners, and so forth. The social walls between them and other Israelis, already high, would rise higher.

Of course, this might be considered a fair price to pay for rectifying an injustice to non-Orthodox Israeli Jews. But some of these Jews, in the name of justice, might demand to have recourse to *civil* marriage and divorce as well. The great majority of them, after all, are not only non-Orthodox but non-Conservative and non-Reform. Although some might find a Conservative marriage ceremony or a Reform divorce proceeding less alien or onerous than its Orthodox counterpart, the wholly secular among them would still be forced to undergo an imposed religious ritual in order to mark a change of personal status; in essence they would be no freer of religious coercion than before. And would not secular Jews in the Diaspora be justified in complaining, just as Reform and Conservative Jews do now, that Israel discriminates against their kind?

And what about Gentiles in Israel, such as the large number of non-Jewish immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union, or the even larger number of foreign workers from countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, many of whom might wish to become Jews for non-religious reasons—out of an identification with the Jewish people, perhaps, or simply because they wish to acquire Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return? Are they to be told with a wink that there are now non-Orthodox rabbis who will quickly convert them to Judaism if only they pretend to see the light of Torah? Or will these rabbis be required to adopt more stringent standards and turn such applicants down, as their Orthodox colleagues do?

CONSISTENCY WOULD seem to demand that once Israel makes a start toward religious evenhandedness, the road be followed to its ultimate destination in the separation of church and state, as is the practice in the United States and other Western democracies. Let there be religious marriages, divorces, and conversions of all types and denominations for those who want them, and civil procedures for those who do not.

But this too turns out to be a nonsolution, particularly in regard to the Law of Return, which guarantees citizenship in Israel to all Jewish applicants. What civil procedure can there be for declaring a Gentile a Jew? The most one could imagine would be some bureaucratic process at the end of which Jewishness would be acquired like a fishing license.

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Well, then, a logical mind might propose, why not do away with the Law of Return, too? Let Israel adopt a policy of origin-blind immigration like America's, which would give Jews no special preference. Let the Jew from New York, the Christian from Ukraine, and the Buddhist from Thailand compete for Israeli citizenship on equal terms.

This would indeed be logical. It would also, so one might think, mean the end of Israel as a Jewish state.

Or would it? After all, if secular Zionism sought from the outset to "normalize" the Jews by remaking them into a people defined by national territory, language, and culture like any other, why is the Tel-Aviv-born-and-raised child of Thai parents who speaks Hebrew as his native language and relates to Israeli culture as his own not a Jew by nationality in the same sense that he would have been an American had he grown up in New York? Because he does not practice Judaism? But neither do many other Israeli Jews; and besides, to be an American one does not have to practice Christianity—or even decorate a Christmas tree.

Because he is not circumcised? That is absurd: what "normal" people can be joined only by having a prepucectomy?

But absurdity is where this whole line of argument, which started with the seemingly rational premise of legal equality for non-Orthodox Judaism in Israel, has apparently led us, although there has been nothing illogical about any of the individual points along the way. Little wonder, then, that a long succession of Israeli governments, and not just for reasons of coalition politics, has struggled mightily against doing the seemingly rational thing.

III

ABSURD OR not, however, the prospect of hundreds of thousands of native-born, non-Arab, Hebrew-speaking Israelis who are not Jews by *halakhic* standards is not merely a possibility; it is a near certainty. When it comes to the foreign workers in its midst today, indeed, Israel is currently in the same stage of denial as was Germany about its *Gastarbeiter*, or France about immigrant labor from Algeria, in the 1960's.

Too struck by the novelty of cheap servants from abroad to grasp the fact of their permanence in the household, most Israelis still believe that when all the dishes are washed, the scaffolds dismantled, and the oranges picked, the last Ghanaian, Romanian, and Thai will board an airplane and head home. But all the dishes are never washed, and the Ghanaian or Thai child born this year in Tel Aviv may already be at home. Either he will become relegated there to perpetual second-class status; or Israel really will cease to be a Jewish state; or he will become a Jew—if not by formally converting, then by acculturating like immigrants everywhere and forcing Israeli notions of Jewishness to include him, just as the Algerian has been reshaping the notion of *francité* and the Turk or the Kurd of *Deutschtum*.

This will not happen more easily in Israel than in France or Germany. It will be a long and wrenching process. But happen it may. And if it does, it will be in a very real sense the logical culmination of secular Zionism—a culmination toward which a large portion of Israeli reality has been moving for close to a century as the specifically religious element of Jewish identity has become progressively attenuated in it.

Indeed, secular Zionism, which set out to create a Jewish national culture independent of religion, and Reform Judaism, which set out to free Judaism of all ethno-cultural specificity, have curiously converged on this point: for each has theoretically, and in no small measure practically, eliminated not one strand but two from the traditional four of Jewish identity—the second being the biological tie of endogamy. And each is now faced with a massive increment of non-Jews such as the Jewish people has probably not known since its rapid spread around the Mediterranean in the early days of the Roman empire. But the result of this convergence, involving transformations and cultural and intellectual adventures that can only be guessed at, will also be a divergence, since the coefficient of Jewish identity between, say, the child of a Jewish-Protestant intermarriage raised in a Reform home in California and feeling little or no ethnic connectedness to other Jews, and the child of an Israeli-Thai intermarriage raised in a secular home in Tel Aviv and feeling little or no religious connectedness to other Jews, will be low.

The Jews, it might thus seem, are on their way to becoming three peoples. One will be traditionally Orthodox and spread all over the world, with its principal concentrations in Israel and the United States. One will be a new Jewish-Gentile hybrid, situated largely in America, in which will flourish, besides more conventional forms of non-Orthodox Judaism, a partly serious and partly zany array of New Age communities, groups, and cults—communal Jews, Buddhist Jews, eco-Jews, femo-Jews, gay Jews, Jesus Jews, neo-hasidic Jews, neo-kabbal-

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istic Jews, pneumatic Jews of all kinds and shapes. And one will consist of secular Israeli Jews, whose already eclectic make-up will absorb the genomes and cultures of Slavs, Thais, Ethiopian Jews, Filipinos, Nigerians, Columbians, Ghanaians, and various self-invented or ostensibly lost-and-found Jewish tribes from remoter parts of the world.

The first of these peoples will live in physical proximity to the other two but will not intermarry or interact Jewishly with either. The second and third will be miscible in principle but will rarely come into contact. Without bans or schisms—Jews, we have said, do not go in for them—all three will slowly drift apart like the tectonic plates of continents.

AN ACCURATE forecast? Probably not. It again ignores the multivalence of things. There are always enough subtrends (for example, secular Israelis seeking to explore their religious roots); subgroups (like Conservative Jews continuing to straddle a middle ground); and crosscurrents (such as Orthodox Jews, the great commuters of the Jewish world), to gum up the works. The more chaotic the Jewish future becomes—and it is likely to be chaotic in the extreme—the more, so chaos theory tells us, small developments will lead to large surprises.

On the face of it, in any case, as ethno-cultural and religious ties among large sectors of the Jewish world decline, and endogamy ceases to be a defining Jewish characteristic, the slack will have to be taken up by politics. Already in our times politics alone has mobilized the solidarity that exists, bringing together disparate groups of Jews with no common cultural or religious agenda.

But Jewish politics need not only be unifying. It can just as easily be divisive, as was the case up to and even for a short while after World War II, when in Europe and Palestine, and to a lesser extent in the United States, right-wing Zionists, left-wing Zionists, anti-Zionists, Hebraists, Yiddishists, Jewish socialists, Jewish Communists, Jewish liberals, Orthodox Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews, and anti-Orthodox Jews were continually at one another's throats. It is hard for Jews today, brought up in a very different atmosphere, to conceive of the passionate hatreds of those years, although thinking about Israel in the period right before and after the Rabin assassination is a help.

The particular intensity of such arguments stemmed from their being *en famille*—sometimes quite literally, since it was not unusual to find Jewish families in the Poland or Germany of the 1920's or 30's in which every brother and sister argued the case for a different political party or position. And even when the family table was a metaphorical one, it was no less real: the ties of *yiddishkayt* binding a Warsaw Communist to a New York Zionist in those years were in most cases strong enough to feel like—ultimately to be—blood ties.

It is this that will most be missing from much Jewish life in the future. Call such life in its past forms tribal, if you will; anthropologically, that is what endogamy is. And this has always been the scandal of Judaism in the eyes of the world, ancient no less than modern: a religious culture pretending to universality yet irrationally clinging to the importance of lineage. It has also been an embarrassment to many ancient and modern Jews, who when they have not simply walked out on their people in indignation or despair have sought some way of undoing its fundamental illogic—even if, as I have pointed out, logically dissolving the paradox of Jewishness results in absurdities of its own.

A secular Zionist myself, I plead guilty to the charge of being one such Jew: I honestly look forward to all that added DNA. But there will be a thinning-out. It was Robert Frost, I believe, who wrote that family is what has to take you in when you have nowhere else to go. It is also that to which you never have to explain yourself. Many Jews in the world today—Orthodox, non-Orthodox, and even sometimes, mysteriously enough, converts—still know what this means in terms of their Jewish identity. They know that although it is irrational for a great religion or culture to be also a caste or a tribe, precisely such foolishness—as hilarious or repugnant as this may seem to others to whom Jewish fate seems far from enviable—is what makes them feel like aristocrats among the nations.

In the future, I would guess, Jews will have a great deal of explaining to do to one another. There will be many different kinds of them out there, all peddling their own version of Jewishness, and the family table will be gone. Meeting in distant places, Jews will not ask each other *vus makht a yid*, the old Yiddish greeting that means "What is a Jew up to?" and that implies unmistakably that the answer, whatever it is, will be understood. They will ask, "Who are you?" and the answer, "A Jew," will tell them little or nothing at all.

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Against an International Criminal Court

Lee A. Casey & David B. Rivkin, Jr.

ALTHOUGH ONE would not necessarily know it from the newspapers, a half-century of debate over the question of how to bring perpetrators of genocide and other grave crimes to justice is now coming to a head. In June, a gathering of diplomats in Rome will put the finishing touches on a United Nations-sponsored treaty to establish an International Criminal Court (ICC). This document will then be put forward for signature and ratification by the 185 member states of the world body.

Not a moment too soon, many might say. After all, the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg after World War II was undertaken in part to keep the horrors of mass slaughter and aggressive war from recurring. Yet, in places as disparate as Cambodia, Rwanda, and Iraq, such horrors *have* recurred, and recurred again, and the guilty parties have gone unpunished. The need for a standing International Criminal Court would thus appear self-evident, its absence itself a kind of crime.

In the United States, a variety of influential organizations—ranging from the American Bar Association (ABA) to monitoring groups like Human Rights Watch—is backing the UN initiative. With Secretary of State Madeleine Albright leading the charge, the Clinton administration, too, though quibbling about some aspects of the draft now under discussion, has expressed its approval of the treaty's basic outline, and is expected in due course to submit a version to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent.

If the ICC were to work as advertised—its professed purpose is to indict warring despots and mass murderers, extradite them, try them, and award them their just deserts—it would be no bad thing. There is, however, a problem, and one with especially severe implications for the United States: it will not, and cannot, work as advertised.

AS IT is currently conceived, the ICC will be an independent international body that will combine in one institution the functions of fact-finding, prosecution, judgment, sentencing, appeal, and pardon. The ICC's judges and prosecutors will be nominated by the signatory states, and elected by their majority vote. A complaint brought by any signatory state, or by the UN Security Council, will empower the ICC prosecutors to investigate, indict, and try individuals for such offenses as crimes against humanity and violations of the laws of war. Trials will not be by jury. Punishment, up to a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, will be decided by the court, as will requests for clemency and parole. The sole venue for appeal will be the appellate division of the ICC itself. There will be no recourse from its decisions, and no ability to overturn the law it sets.

To begin at the beginning, it is highly questionable whether the Constitution allows the U.S. government to delegate its judicial authority—to delegate, in other

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words, the right to put Americans on trial for offenses (like planning an allegedly illegal military action) that they have committed on American soil—to an institution that is not a court of the United States. The defining case here is *Ex parte Milligan*, decided shortly after the Civil War, in which the Supreme Court struck down the conviction of a civilian by a military tribunal. Because the military tribunal had not been established under Article III of the Constitution, ruled the Court, it was not "part of the judicial power of the country." The same reasoning would clearly apply to the ICC and render its judgments against Americans unenforceable in the United States.

Even if a way around this could be found—and it would require, at a minimum, that ICC judges be appointed by the U.S. President, be approved by the U.S. Senate, and serve for life—the ICC would still be unconstitutional. In particular, though the ICC will be empowered to indict and try American citizens, its procedures will fail to provide American defendants who come before it the basic guarantees they enjoy under the Constitution's Bill of Rights.

Thus, the Constitution's Fourth Amendment protects Americans against unreasonable searches and seizures; the Fifth Amendment requires grand-jury indictments, forbids double jeopardy, and gives an assurance of "due process of law"; the Sixth Amendment ensures that in all criminal prosecutions the accused shall have the right to be tried "by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed"; the Eighth Amendment forbids excessive bail and fines, as well as cruel and unusual punishment. None of these rights is adequately preserved in the ICC agreement, and most are not preserved at all.

The absence of these safeguards is all the more disturbing because the Supreme Court stated plainly in an 1890 case, *De Geofroy* v. *Riggs*, that the constitutional rights of Americans cannot be abridged by the federal government's power to conclude treaties. That power, stated the Court, does not enable the government to "authorize what the Constitution forbids." The Court reiterated this view in a particularly pertinent case, *In re Yamashita*, heard shortly after the end of World War II and dealing with the same subject matter that will come before the ICC. In any conflict between U.S. law and the laws of war, noted the Supreme Court, U.S. law must prevail: "[W]e do not make the laws of war but we respect them so far as they *do not* conflict with the commands of Congress or the Constitution" (emphasis added).

The fact that the constitutional case against the ICC seems straightforward has not prevented the ICC's supporters, including the American Bar Association, from blithely dismissing it. An organization ostensibly devoted to the rule of law, the ABA describes constitutional objections to the ICC as a "red herring," asserting that since the ICC will not be a "court of the United States," the Bill of Rights will not apply to its proceedings. This analysis is as simple as it is wrong. The protections offered by the Bill of Rights, as we have seen, extend to every act of the entire federal government, including its agreements with other nations.

BUT NOW suppose that the ICC treaty were somehow altered to pass constitutional muster—that is, by scrapping the current draft and starting again. Even so, compelling reasons remain for not setting up a supranational criminal court that will be empowered to stand in judgment not only of the usual despots and mass murderers but also, by definition, of the U.S. and its allies.

The danger of politicization and anti-Americanism, inherent in all international institutions, has been driven home time and again by the behavior of such bodies as the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, and the UN itself. While it is true that the level of anti-Americanism may have waned somewhat now that the cold war has drawn to an end and the Soviet Union has disappeared, the United States and its allies still have enemies, and those enemies, if they accede to the ICC treaty, will have a say in the composition of the court's personnel. Add to the mix the many countries that are not overtly hostile to the U.S. but that wish to check an assertive American foreign policy, and inevitably a tremendous potential for mischief will arise.

Here is an example of how things can go awry. The Clinton administration has asserted that if Saddam Hussein further impedes the work of UN inspectors searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the U.S. has the legal right to strike Baghdad without further action by the UN Security Council. Yet three of the five permanent members of the Council—Russia, China, and France—disagree. They maintain that a U.S. attack would be a violation of the UN mandate and consequently of international law.

If a court like the ICC were in place, a decision to hit Saddam Hussein would leave the President, and each and every American who participated in the formulation and execution of the military operation, vulnerable to investigation and prosecution. How might the court's proceedings unfold? The prosecution might root its case in the civilian casualties that Iraq would inevitably incur in the course of the U.S. strike. If the ICC determined that sufficient evidence existed to hand up an indictment for violation of the laws of war, the United States would be legally bound to surrender the individuals charged, be they military or civilian, Secretary of State or GS-7 file clerk, President or private. While there would be no enforce-

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ment mechanism on U.S. soil to compel acquiescence, the ICC could issue international warrants; those under indictment would then be unable to travel overseas for fear of arrest. The ICC could also opt to begin proceedings against U.S. officials *in absentia*.

Naturally, the President and other responsible officials would have a number of defenses at their disposal. They could claim, for example, that the attacks on Iraq had been authorized by previous Security Council resolutions and that civilians were not deliberately targeted. Ultimately, however, the merits of the case would be for the ICC to determine, and the court's findings, as noted above, could not be appealed except to the ICC itself.

A SCENARIO like this one may seem unlikely. But whether or not it ever comes to pass, the very existence of a court that can at any time initiate investigations of U.S. actions around the globe will almost certainly impose inhibitions on the conduct of American foreign policy. In fact, even the Clinton administration is troubled by the prospect of the ICC's becoming an uncontrollable rogue institution. "We do have concerns about a prosecutor who would act on his or her own authority," admits David Scheffer, the head of the U.S. delegation to the negotiations.

To keep the ICC within acceptable bounds, the administration has sought to revise the mechanism that will trigger its initiation of a case; these proposed revisions, however, fall far short of the mark. For example, the U.S. wants to require "complementarity," which means that the ICC would become involved in prosecuting individuals only if their own government had failed to bring them to justice. But this particular proposal comes with a qualification: the power to determine whether a good-faith effort at prosecution had been made would be retained by the ICC itself. It is a generous loophole, and potentially a lethal one.

The U.S. also wants to require a referral by the UN Security Council before the ICC can investigate any particular conflict or atrocity. This would allow the United States to exercise its veto when American interests are threatened. But one can easily imagine what would happen in practice: on every occasion in which the U.S. considered casting its veto to prevent the ICC from taking action, it would be accused of hypocrisy and lawlessness, and find itself under intense pressure to acquiesce. And such occasions are likely to abound, given the investigatory latitude the ICC is to enjoy.

To understand what is at stake here, let us return to the example of Iraq, and let us suppose that Kuwait, say, were to attempt to bring Saddam Hussein before the ICC for committing war crimes. An ICC investigation into this matter could easily expand to encompass an inquiry of another sort entirely—namely, into the war crimes that Saddam Hussein himself has alleged were committed by the U.S. *against Iraq*. To avert this possibility, the U.S. might then be forced to exercise its veto—and thus block even friendly states like Kuwait from initiating a referral.

Indeed, to avoid having its current or former leadership brought before an international tribunal to answer for American foreign policy, Washington might find itself compelled to veto *any* referral of *any* conflict where American arms were involved. In the end, all the ICC would then have accomplished would be to tie our foreign policy in knots. In the eyes of some around the world, to be sure, this might well seem a desirable goal; but how it would serve our own interests—or, for that matter, the interests of peace and the rule of law—is a mystery.

DO THE palpable flaws of the ICC treaty mean that the world community is helpless to bring outlaws to justice? Hardly. The UN Security Council already possesses the authority to establish tribunals to investigate and punish war crimes. It has, in fact, recently established two: the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the international criminal tribunal for Rwanda. Unlike the ICC, however, their territorial jurisdiction and temporal duration are limited. Thus far, the Yugoslav tribunal has issued eighteen indictments against 74 individuals, of whom twenty are in custody. It concluded its first trial, of a Serbian concentration-camp guard, last July, sentencing him to prison for twenty years. A number of other cases are to be heard in the next few months. Some may consider this too little, too late; but with sufficient international backing, such courts can accomplish a great deal.

The ICC also promises to accomplish a great deal—but precisely what those accomplishments will be is another matter. In the name of international law, the treaty will undermine our own system of justice. In the name of bringing aggressors to account, it will diminish our own ability to do exactly that, while augmenting the possibility that we or one of our close allies will sooner or later find ourselves in the dock.

The Clinton administration's penchant for multilateralism is by now an old story. Even so, it is astonishing that it has so fervently embraced a document with such obvious faults. Is this really the straitjacket in which the world's greatest power, and its best hope for peace, wishes to place itself?

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Table Manners and Morals

Elizabeth Powers

My New York friends are taken aback when they hear of my childhood eating habits. My daily fare—this was in Kentucky in the 50's—consisted of such items as Campbell's soup, Dinty Moore beef stew, and Hostess Twinkies. On coming home from school, I would typically prepare a snack of two slices of white bread smeared with Miracle Whip (which, until I was in my twenties, I thought was the same as mayonnaise). My idea of cooking was laying out on a thin metal sheet the frozen fish sticks that we heated for dinner on Friday evenings. Although we always had salad of real lettuce and tomatoes, the dressing came from a bottle; only on the rare occasions when we ate in restaurants did I notice that my mother, harking back to earlier and more gracious days, would resort to the cruets of vinegar and oil.

The reason we ate frozen vegetables, canned foods, and all other manner of packaged preparations was that, in contrast to my friends, I had a mother who worked outside the home, riding a bus every morning to an office where she took shorthand and typed letters. But this did not mean that we neglected family habits. Whatever our meals consisted of, we ate them together, even if we had been fighting and harboring murderous thoughts about one another. Every morning we sat down as a family at breakfast (for me, cereal with loads of sugar on top, or sugar-covered donuts washed down with Welch's grape juice). There was no rushing to get out of the house; my parents hunkered down with their weak coffee—my mother's black, my father's lightened with condensed milk from a can—and read the *Louisville Courier-Journal* before each of us left for our respective destinations.

Such remembered tableaux endow the past with an aura of stability that may well be deceptive. Indeed, this odd juxtaposition—prepackaged foods combined with genteel table habits—seems quaint beside so many other less genteel aspects of our family life: persistent dunning by bill collectors, constant repossessions of our car, and relocations to ever more meager and ever less inviting apartments (my father's employment was sporadic). Yet our outward propriety, which remained an immovable fact, has lately been on my mind. Forty years down the road, with lots of American mothers working, with instant food much more ubiquitously the rule of the day, do families still sit down together for meals? Does it make any difference that we now have our coffee not at home but at Starbucks, or that the government feeds our children breakfast in school?

When I ask my friends such questions, some of them respond by dismissing me as a "conservative."

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And it may be true that inwardly I remain in something of a time warp, while outwardly, which is perhaps what confuses them, I have undergone the same material changes as they. That is, I look like a with-it female of the late 1990's; I am a runner, and the only time I look at a Hostess Twinkie is to marvel at the calorie count printed on the wrapper; and, as the beneficiary of cosmetic and medical democratization, I certainly will not, like my grandmother, have blue hair when I am sixty.

These material changes are partly the long-term result of the slight lift in my parents' financial status that occurred as I was about to enter college in the 1960's. But the economic upturn of those days was a nationwide development, and its beneficiaries included many of my female contemporaries, who were quick to head for lucrative professions, particularly in the law. I, too, after leaving my parents' home, devoted myself to what early feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill called the "higher spheres," areas of intellectual life from which women had traditionally been excluded. In my case that translated into literary and academic pursuits.

It also, again in common with many women of my generation, translated into my remaining single and childless. In contrast to the restricted and unending round of duty that was my parents' lot in life, my own existence was characterized by a great deal of freedom. But this was truly deceptive. Like my ambitious friends, and despite the lack of personal encumbrances—for decades I lived alone, and had no one else to whom I was responsible—I came to have very little life outside my work. So much freedom, so little time: the mantra of my class.

Still, a few years ago I did meet a man who decided he wanted to marry me. As fate would have it, within months of getting to know him I became a candidate for a position at a major university several hundred miles distant from New York City. Perhaps because I had never been married, and perhaps because I could not cook, I was somewhat naive about what goes into making a life together. Since the so-called bicoastal marriage is not uncommon in academia, I briefly considered pushing hard for the position. Luckily, several female colleagues warned me against it, explaining that the professional demands on my time would be so great that even under optimal conditions I could hardly expect to have much personal life for several years. One of them even confided that her own marriage had foundered because of such a long-distance arrangement.

I marvel now at my failure to consider what is involved in building a common household, forming common friendships and interests, strengthening the ties that bind—ties that come, for a start, from sitting down every morning to coffee together. In having decided to "give up" my evenings and weekends in order to cultivate a life with another human being, I was on the road to an eventual illumination concerning the difference between myself and many of my feminist peers. When these women say, as many of them do, that what they really need is a wife, they are alluding not only to all the household tasks that feminists find so exploitative—so consuming of their precious time—but to the palpable fact that something is missing from their lives. In my judgment, what is missing are precisely those habits of graciousness, decorum, and civility that my mother and father unwittingly impressed on us during our morning hours at the breakfast table.

THE COARSENING of American manners is a much-bruited complaint these days, often illustrated by children who seem constitutionally incapable of removing their baseball caps, who cannot sit up straight in a chair, or who walk down the street stuffing pizza into their mouths. Fault is routinely ascribed to mass advertising, to television, or to the movies. But I wonder if anyone has noticed how common this coarse behavior has become not among children but among adults, and precisely in the social spheres where one would expect to see it the least—namely, among those of my generation who have helped to produce and have certainly benefited from the astounding affluence we enjoy.

The lack of personal cultivation in those with full access to a genteel style of life is on view in public spaces from Barnes & Noble to airport waiting lounges. My own favorite image is of the Wall Street type on a commuter train, his expensive suit no match for the flaking croissant and tipping cup of gourmet coffee he has heedlessly balanced on his lap. To take another snapshot: at academic conferences, untidy and uncouth professors, male and female alike, can be seen slouching in the hotel bar as if it were their personal rumpus room, declining to order anything while awaiting the signal to enter the banquet rooms and fall upon the free food and drink. So much for the life of the mind!

Academics being good talkers, the disappearance of decorum has been met by an entire industry devoted to questioning the *value* of decorum—indeed, to showing that manners and standards of behavior are marks not of civilization but of op-

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pression. Disdain for convention has become the basis of whole intellectual doctrines, from deconstruction to the "new historicism," aimed at subverting our appreciation for the beautiful surface of things and justifying our failure even to make the effort. As our outer muscles tire from all the work that makes us successful and that we are constantly complaining about, our inner muscles atrophy into sloth.

This brings me back to my mother, who made me go through the motions. Acceptance of convention—conventional graces, conventional duties—is not something one is born with. It has to be implanted and cultivated in wild, young children by their patient elders. Parents who do the necessary work have obviously acquired a little starch in their own outward habits, if only by dint of *being* parents. Yet the sheer numbers these days of single women of advancing years, and of professional couples who turn over their children to nannies, suggest that my generation and class feel an attenuated personal stake in transmitting those indispensable aspects of our common human inheritance.

I RECENTLY read a review in the *New Yorker* of a volume of letters by the food writer M.F.K. Fisher. Though she grew up in an earlier era than did I, Fisher's childhood experience in the barren cultural soil of California seems, meal-wise, to have been no less impoverished. As a mature writer, Fisher became famous for her sensuous evocations of food, evocations that, for her, are clearly entangled with the cultivation of a private life, of love and friendship and family ties.

The author of the *New Yorker* review, Joan Acocella, though clearly an admirer of Fisher, overlooks this connection of themes. Instead, she focuses in the course of her review on the moment after World War II when Fisher, having published nine books in the space of twelve years, returned from Europe to her hometown in California—"a conservative town where she no longer felt comfortable"—to undertake the arduous task of caring for her dying father. During this period, Fisher stopped writing; she even stopped regarding herself as a writer.

Here is Acocella's evaluation of Fisher's sacrifice:

> Those who lament the dissolution of the American family—kids with no way to get to Girl Scouts, aging parents put into nursing homes—should remember what it was that kept the American family together: women's blood.

That metonymic "women's blood" is good—a phrase richly connotative of earthly female experience—though I am tempted to respond to it with the prosaic thought that, long before women started filling corporate boardrooms, American men, too, metaphorically sweated blood during the best years of their lives to keep their families together. But Acocella is quite naturally fixated on women's roles, and her phrase neatly captures current priorities: to maintain that the sacrifices the private sphere may entail are justified—that children need someone to take them to Scouts, or that our aging parents need our care rather than the ministrations of social workers, or even that food needs to be prepared and served—is to suggest that women should be kept from participating in the public sphere, and especially its higher reaches.

My own mother, as it happens, in common with most mothers of her class, harbored quite lofty ambitions for her children. In fact, she was a great imitator of those who inhabited social spheres higher than her own. Her morning rituals, including drinking coffee and reading the newspaper at home, were components of a life of amenity to which she *aspired*. (Probably, it was the same kind of life that Betty Friedan was just then in the process of demolishing.) Besides being acutely aware of the ideals of the surrounding culture, however, she also understood the connection between the exercise of private virtues and the attainment of higher public goods, whether in school or in life. While struggling with my father to keep a roof over the heads of her often ungrateful children, she winged it, as best she could, with the ceremonies of our morning and evening meals. She could, of course, also expect the schools to do what schools used to do.

Nowadays, the sorts of women my mother took as her models have law or medical degrees. For them to become full-time mothers would mean removing themselves from the labor market when they are at the height of their earning power. Naturally, few do so. May that have something to do, I wonder, not only with their children's failed manners but with their failure to perform well in school, at least as measured by international comparisons of achievement? It is one of the sublime ironies of the age that ambitious and often gifted women have children who will not match the capabilities that have made these women successful.

These mothers obviously believe they can offset their absence from home by sending their children to posh private schools, or by living in neighborhoods where the public schools rank high. But it

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stands to reason that the replacement of mothers by Norwegian or French or German girls of nineteen and twenty will ultimately have a detrimental effect on the life of the mind. No wonder that, as with academic deconstructors, a journalistic sub-industry has sprung up to advance the notion that excessive competitiveness in school causes emotional damage; such doctrines seem calculated to justify the laziness of overworked parents while making them feel better about the declining accomplishments of their children.

ULTIMATELY, OF course, it is the less privileged classes and their children who suffer the most from these progressive ideas. All the effort that children like myself used to devote to becoming popular and successful—efforts our mothers insisted on—has been cast aside as the relic of a more compulsive age. If we were not high academic achievers, we at least tried to get respectable grades. We also imitated the outward habits of the most successful children, seeking to dress nicely within our means, groom ourselves, excel in extracurricular activities, speak grammatically. The payoff was that one day some of us might be lucky enough to study literature, travel in Europe, come to appreciate fine food, live the good life. Nowadays children, often financed by their working mothers, seem to ape their superiors solely in conspicuous consumption. In dress and manners, and therefore, I would say, in their spiritual and intellectual standards, they look, and act, down.

The great English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626), in "On Marriage and the Single Life," wrote that "the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from unmarried men." He meant that single men, being freed from the economic and physical burdens of family life, could devote themselves single-mindedly to their ideas and their projects. But the sentence captures something else about life in those "higher spheres" where so many women, married and single, have now also landed: that it rewards, and sometimes requires, sterility.

What Bacon well knew is that seeing to the posterity of the race has its own requirements, as well as its mutually fructifying rewards. Parents, he wrote in the same essay, "have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges."

One can take this statement literally: the sacrifices mothers and fathers make for their children provide an example that children absorb into their innermost beings, and that serves them well when they too become parents. But there is a universal dimension to the trouble parents, and especially mothers, take upon themselves in cultivating decorous behavior (including good table manners) in their children. They thereby help to ensure that intellectual and cultural achievements, indeed the larger spiritual legacy that has been passed down to them, are not squandered but are rather preserved, enriched, and handed on to future generations.

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MUSIC

Swinging With Benny Goodman

Terry Teachout

SIXTY YEARS ago this January, Benny Goodman and his band appeared at New York's Carnegie Hall—the first time a full evening of jazz had been presented at the most celebrated concert hall in America. It was the final step in the twenty-eight-year-old clarinetist's whirlwind transformation from a respected but obscure studio musician to a national media figure, the first mass-culture hero to come from the world of jazz. Seventeen years later, he was the subject of an absurd but commercially successful movie, *The Benny Goodman Story*, and for the rest of his life his name was known and respected by people who knew little else about jazz.

Goodman was no less widely admired by his peers, both for his brilliant playing and for his courageous decision in 1936 to hire Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton, the first black musicians to perform regularly in public with a white band. Nor were his achievements limited to jazz: just three months after the Carnegie Hall concert, he performed on the first classical recording to be made by a well-known jazz musician.*

To be sure, Goodman had—and has—his detractors. Dubbed the "King of Swing" by the popular press, he was denounced by some who felt his fame had been won at the expense of more original black musicians, and to this day he is treated as a nonperson by commentators seeking to rewrite the history of jazz along race-conscious lines. Most music critics found his classical playing to be lacking in personality. And after his death, musicians who had worked with him from the 30's onward began to speak frankly about his personal peculiarities, telling stories—about his boorishness, stinginess, and insensitivity—that had long circulated within the jazz community but had never before seen print.

Yet none of this has significantly diminished the general esteem in which Goodman is still held. His recordings continue to sell, and he has been the subject of two full-scale biographies, one of which, Ross Firestone's *Swing, Swing, Swing: The Life and Times of Benny Goodman* (1993), ranks among the best books ever written about a jazz musician. There can be no doubt that he was a difficult man, but the fuller portrait of his youth that has emerged in recent years has done much to put his idiosyncrasies in perspective: few American artists started with so little, or accomplished so much.

BORN IN 1909, Benjamin David Goodman was the ninth of twelve children of a Jewish tailor who moved to the United States from Poland in 1894. David Goodman toiled in the sweatshops of Chicago, moving his growing family from one tenement to another as his income rose and fell. Dora, his Lithuanian-born wife, never learned to read or write English.

In later life, Benny Goodman would make every effort to put his early years behind him. Although he had grown up in a kosher home, he never practiced Judaism; he cultivated an upper-class accent that came and went according to his

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* Goodman's recordings are discussed in the discography at the end of this article.

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mood, purchased Impressionist paintings, and married a member of the Vanderbilt family. On the rare occasions when he did speak of his childhood, it was in harshly unsentimental terms:

> I can remember when we lived in a basement without heat during the winter, and a couple of times when there wasn't anything to eat. I don't mean *much* to eat. I mean *anything*. This isn't an experience you forget in a hurry. I haven't ever forgotten it.

Yet it was in the Maxwell Street ghetto of Chicago that Goodman took his first steps on the road to fame. In 1919, he began studying clarinet at a synagogue that provided free music lessons to poor children. He subsequently joined the boys' band at Hull House, the settlement house founded by Jane Addams, and while there he also spent two years studying privately with Franz Schoepp, a rigid disciplinarian whose methods laid the groundwork for Goodman's later virtuosity. But what made the real difference was the pupil's fanatical determination to excel: he practiced for several hours each day, continuing to do so until the day he died.

By 1925, Goodman, known throughout Chicago as a clarinetist of exceptional ability, had joined the dance band of the drummer Ben Pollack, with which he made his first commercial recordings the following year. The Pollack band traveled to New York in 1928, and Goodman stayed there to work as a freelance musician, playing in radio orchestras and at hundreds of recording sessions. But he was too ambitious to remain a mere sideman, and too abrasive to kowtow to the powerful contractors who ran the freelance scene in New York; instead, he began to consider starting a band of his own, one that would not only appeal to dancers but also play swinging jazz.

In 1934, Goodman put together a fourteen-piece band that, after months of scuffling, was hired to play on a new NBC radio program called *Let's Dance*. The deep pockets of the National Biscuit Company, the program's sponsor, made it possible for him to buy arrangements from Fletcher Henderson, the distinguished black composer, who had recently broken up his own group. Henderson's laconic, crisply swinging arrangements—among them "King Porter Stomp," "Down South Camp Meeting," and "Sometimes I'm Happy"—quickly became the band's trademark. The success of Goodman's appearances on *Let's Dance* led the Victor company to sign him to a recording contract, and within a matter of months the potent combination of record sales, radio exposure, and nationwide touring had made him a star.

A COMPULSIVE perfectionist, Goodman was constantly hiring and firing musicians and rehearsing the new arrangements he commissioned from other gifted writers like Jimmy Mundy ("Swingtime in the Rockies"), Deane Kincaide ("Bugle Call Rag"), and Mary Lou Williams ("Roll 'Em"). By 1937, he had forged an ensemble of extraordinary collective virtuosity, noted for the distinctive playing of the trumpeter Harry James (who also composed "Life Goes to a Party," one of the band's best instrumentals), the pianist Jess Stacy, the rhythm guitarist Allan Reuss, and the drummer Gene Krupa. But Goodman himself remained the band's foremost soloist, and his lean, bright tone and aggressive yet controlled style, coupled with a technique unrivaled by any other contemporary reed player, soon made him the most imitated clarinetist in jazz.

His playing was heard to best advantage in the "band within the band" that he featured at every performance. The Benny Goodman Trio, which consisted of Goodman, Krupa, and the superlatively elegant pianist Teddy Wilson—they would later be joined by the extroverted vibraphonist Lionel Hampton to form the Goodman Quartet—was the first small group since the early days of jazz to win broad popularity in concert and on record. The trio and quartet were freer and less structured in their musical approach than the full band, and Goodman took full advantage of the opportunity they gave him to display his formidable skills as an improviser.

It was Goodman's success that inspired dozens of other musicians to start similar groups of their own and thus create the nationwide craze for what came to be called "swing." Though large dance bands, many of the best of them black, had been playing jazz for years, Goodman introduced the big-band sound to the white teenagers of the baby boom that followed World War I. Thanks mainly to their enthusiastic response, the 30's are now known to historians of American popular music as "the swing era."

THE GOODMAN band was at the peak of its powers by the end of 1937, but there was unrest in the ranks. Goodman's near-complete inability to relate to other musicians on a personal level, combined with his ruthless quest for musical perfection, had alienated many of his key players. (No doubt they would have wanted anyway to become leaders in their own right.) Shortly after the Carnegie Hall concert, Gene Krupa quit to start his own group; Harry James and Teddy Wilson soon followed.

Goodman spent much of the next two years trying vainly to revitalize the band, but it became increasingly clear that his interests had temporarily shifted elsewhere. As early as 1935 he had begun to play classical music, and two days after the Carnegie Hall concert he took part in a radio broadcast of the first movement of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet; later that year, he recorded the complete work for Victor with the Budapest String Quartet. There-

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after he performed classical music regularly, appearing with leading orchestras and commissioning numerous works for clarinet, including Béla Bartók's *Contrasts* (1938), the concertos of Paul Hindemith (1947) and Aaron Copland (1947-48), and Francis Poulenc's Clarinet Sonata (1962). Starting in 1949, he also began to study intensively with the great English clarinetist Reginald Kell, making major changes in his playing technique as a result.

Asked why he took up classical music when he did, Goodman replied simply that "I wanted something else to do to give myself a challenge." Yet it is surprising that he should have felt the need for this challenge—no jazz musician of note had previously appeared publicly as a classical soloist—and his playing received mixed reviews, even from critics who liked jazz. They were right: Goodman played classical music like a self-made man whose table manners have been painstakingly learned from a book of etiquette. His 1938 recording of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet is fluent and correct but pallid in tone, and his phrasing in the slow movement is stiffly four-square.

Though Goodman eventually became more comfortable with the classical literature, he never learned to play it idiomatically, and his recorded performances are for the most part tasteful but dull (an exception is his second recording of Copland's lovely Clarinet Concerto, whose cadenza and second movement have a jazzy flavor). His chief contribution to classical music was not as a performer but as an enlightened patron: the pieces he commissioned from Copland, Hindemith, and other 20th-century composers now form the cornerstone of the modern clarinet repertoire.

In any case, it was never Goodman's intention to turn his back on jazz, and by 1939 he had assembled a band whose style would depart considerably from the straightforward swing that had made him rich and famous.

Fletcher Henderson continued to write for Goodman, but it was Eddie Sauter whose arrangements set the tone for the new band. In "Benny Rides Again," "Superman," and "Clarinet à la King," the classically trained Sauter consciously sought to expand the harmonic and textural language of big-band jazz, and the pianist Mel Powell, a prodigy who later studied composition with Hindemith, echoed that approach in such memorable pieces of his own as "The Earl" and "Mission to Moscow." Goodman also hired the electric guitarist Charlie Christian; Cootie Williams, formerly Duke Ellington's much-admired solo trumpeter; and the peerless drummers Dave Tough and Sid Catlett, who drove the band with unprecedented finesse and subtlety.

The "Sauter band," as it became known to musicians, was so fresh in its approach that Goodman seems to have found it both disconcerting and difficult to control, and when Sauter and Powell left in 1942, he reverted to a simpler style. But he was unable to recapture the spirit of the earlier band—his best post-Sauter playing was done with a 1945 sextet that featured the vibraharpist Red Norvo and specialized in such staples as "After You've Gone," "Tiger Rag," and "Liza"—and in 1946 he called it quits, briefly going into semi-retirement.

Part of Goodman's problem was that jazz had lately undergone a drastic change: the alto saxophonist Charlie Parker and the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie had developed a rhythmically angular, harmonically complex style known as bebop. Though some swing players were able to make the transition—Charlie Christian's highly individual style on the electric guitar in fact foreshadowed bebop—many others resisted the technically demanding new mode, finding it too difficult to grasp.

Goodman made a serious effort to master bebop, recording with such younger musicians as the trumpeter Fats Navarro and the tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray. In 1948, he led a strikingly original seven-piece group that featured Gray and the Swedish clarinetist Stan Hasselgard, and later that year he launched a bop-oriented big band. But he proved unable to assimilate bebop harmony—he had never been comfortable with advanced harmonic concepts, preferring the uncomplicatedly diatonic language of 20's jazz—and his aging fans were in any case uninterested in further musical adventure.

Bowing to the inevitable, Goodman broke up his bebop band in 1949. He never again attempted to organize a full-time ensemble, spending the rest of his life intermittently leading semipermanent ensembles and pick-up groups. Though some of these later groups made fine music, and Goodman's own playing remained technically secure, he had nothing to say musically that he had not already said many times over, and by the time of his death in 1986 he had long since ceased to be a major voice in jazz.

Asked in the 60's why people continued to listen to his music, Goodman replied, "Sometimes I think it is nostalgia, and then I listen to the records and say, 'No, it isn't—absolutely not.'"

Nostalgia, of course, did play a part in it: he was one of the enduring symbols of the simpler, more innocent life of prewar America. But younger listeners also responded to Goodman's recordings from the 30's and 40's not for their symbolic or sociological value but because of their lasting musical quality.

It is true that many earlier black bands—particularly those of Henderson, Duke Ellington, Jimmie Lunceford, and Earl Hines—played with a rhythmic flexibility and lightness of touch that eluded Goodman's first band. (To compare the Hines and Goodman recordings of Jimmy

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Mundy's "Madhouse" is to receive an invaluable lesson in the difference between "black" and "white" ensemble styles.) Still, Goodman succeeded in putting his own personal stamp on the big-band idiom, as both black and white musicians attested. Ellington, for example, described the trumpeters Harry James, Ziggy Elman, and Chris Griffin, who played together in Goodman's band in 1937, as "the greatest trumpet section that ever was."

The praise was deserved. The combination of precision and fire that can be heard on the best studio recordings of Goodman's 30's band—and even more so on the incandescent live performances originally broadcast on network radio and now available on CD—is both individual and irresistible. And the recordings made by the 40's band, though never as popular as those of the earlier group, are fully as remarkable.

As for Goodman's own playing, it is undeniable that he was not a stylistic innovator (though he learned much from the ones he hired, especially Charlie Christian), and so cannot be directly compared with such groundbreaking figures as Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker. But no jazz clarinet player, before or since, has explored the expressive potential of his instrument more completely, and none has been more influential. No amount of carping, or of political posturing, can obscure the fact that Benny Goodman, whether or not he truly deserved to be called the King of Swing, was beyond question the greatest clarinetist in the history of jazz.

Benny Goodman on CD
A Select Discography

MOST OF Benny Goodman's commercial recordings have been transferred to CD. The following is a representative cross-section of his best work:

1926-34: *A Jazz Holiday* (ASV Living Era CD AJA 5263) contains 24 early recordings featuring Goodman both as leader of his own studio groups and as a sideman with the bands of Rube Bloom, Ted Lewis, Irving Mills, Red Nichols, Ben Pollack and Joe Venuti, and Eddie Lang.

1935-38: Most of the key studio recordings of Goodman's first big band, including "King Porter Stomp," "Down South Camp Meeting," "Sometimes I'm Happy," "Swingtime in the Rockies," and "Madhouse," are available in excellent transfers by John R. T. Davies on *Benny Goodman Plays Fletcher Henderson* (Hep CD 1038) and *Benny Goodman Plays Jimmy Mundy* (Hep CD 1039). The complete studio recordings of the Goodman trio and quartet are on *After You've Gone* (Bluebird 5631-2-RB) and *Avalon* (Bluebird 2273-2-RB).

On the Air (1937-1938) (Columbia/Legacy C2K 48836) is a two-CD set of radio broadcasts in which the Goodman band can be heard in vibrant performances of such signature pieces as "Bugle Call Rag," "Life Goes to a Party," and "Roll 'Em." Also available is a live recording of the 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, but the sound is muffled and the performances are generally less compelling than those included in *On the Air* (Columbia Legacy C2K 10244).

Goodman's 1938 recording with the Budapest Quartet of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, K. 581, has been reissued several times on CD, most recently as part of *The Budapest String Quartet: The Complete Victor Recordings* (Biddulph LAB 140).

1939-46: Goodman's second band, which featured the arrangements of Eddie Sauter and Mel Powell, is sketchily represented on CD. *Benny Goodman Plays Eddie Sauter* (Hep CD 1053) includes "Benny Rides Again," "Superman," and "Clarinet à la King"; the contents of this CD overlap with the unevenly interesting selection available on *Clarinet à la King* (Columbia/Legacy CK 40834) and *All the Cats Join In* (Columbia/Legacy CK 44158). *Roll 'Em: Benny Goodman and Sid Catlett Live in 1941* (Vintage Jazz Classics VJC-1032) contains radio broadcasts from the same period featuring the drummer Sid Catlett.

Goodman's sextet and septet recordings with the guitarist Charlie Christian are collected on *Charlie Christian: The Genius of the Electric Guitar* (Columbia/Legacy CK 40846) and *The Benny Goodman Sextet, 1939-1941, Featuring Charlie Christian* (Columbia/Legacy CK

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45144). The complete studio recordings of Goodman's later sextet, featuring the vibraphonist Red Norvo, can be heard on *Slipped Disc* (Columbia/Legacy CK 44292).

The 1940 premiere recording of Bartók's *Contrasts*, for which Goodman was joined by the violinist Joseph Szigeti and the composer at the piano, is available in several CD versions, including a two-disc set of chamber-music performances by Szigeti (Biddulph LAB 070-71).

1947-55: *The Complete Capitol Small Group Recordings of Benny Goodman, 1944-1955* (Mosaic MD4-148), a four-CD set available only by mail from Mosaic Records (203-327-7111), contains a wide-ranging selection of performances recorded after the war by Goodman and a diverse assortment of musicians, including "Stealin' Apples" with the trumpeter Fats Navarro and the tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray. Radio broadcasts by Goodman's bebop-influenced septet of 1948, which featured Gray and the clarinetist Stan Hasselgard, are on *Stan Hasselgard and Benny Goodman: At Click 1948* (Dragon DRCD 183).

1956-86: Goodman's later jazz recordings, including the many live performances from his private tape archive that have appeared on CD since his death, are for the most part derivative of his earlier work and of limited musical interest. An exception is *Benny Goodman in Moscow*, a two-LP set of his 1962 tour of the Soviet Union, originally released by RCA and yet to appear on CD. The best of his postwar classical recordings is the 1963 stereo remake of the Copland Clarinet Concerto, conducted by the composer (Columbia MK 42227).

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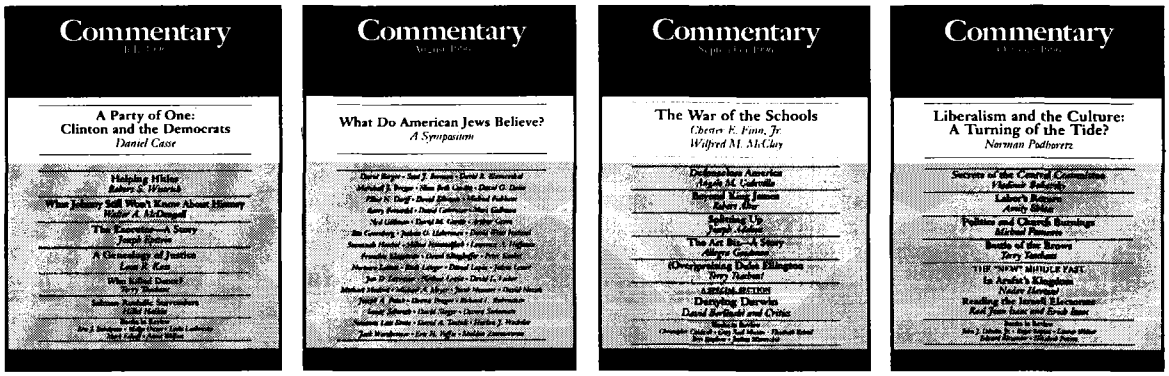

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Books in Review

Modest Virtues

One Nation, After All
by Alan Wolfe
Viking. 358 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Wilfred M. McClay

EVEN WHEN they do not set out with that in mind, comprehensive portraits of American culture and society almost always end up turning into studies of the middle class. There are good reasons for this. While the United States has never been a universally or uniformly middle-class society—a truism that social scientists continue to trumpet as if it were a pathbreaking discovery—the values and aspirations of the middle class have dominated the American moral landscape for most of our history. "As the middle class goes," writes the sociologist Alan Wolfe in the opening sentence of this book, "so goes America"—and he is undoubtedly right.

This does not mean, however, that it is easy to *define* the middle class. In fact, it sometimes seems that an amorphous sense of "betweenness" is about as precise as our definitions can get. Economically, the term seems to cover a wide range of circumstances, in a fluid, shifting space between utter want and dependency on the one hand and conspicuous or superfluous wealth on the other. So, too, with middle-class norms, which ideally call for a life of neither docile servility nor godlike unconstraint but aim at the more modest goal of what used to be called "competency"—an ability to fend for oneself and take responsibility for one's life, without presuming to raise oneself above the plane of one's peers and thereby violate the principle of social equality. But the main point is this: middle-class status is as much a matter of shared sensibility as of shared socioeconomic prospects.

In *One Nation, After All*, Alan Wolfe, now at Boston University, focuses exclusively and with a surprising measure of sympathy on this sensibility, as reflected in extensive interviews that he and an assistant conducted in eight suburban communities scattered around the country. (The book's full subtitle is "What Middle-Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other.") I say a surprising measure of sympathy because modern intellectuals of the Left have almost invariably defined themselves and their ethos in opposition to middle-class morality, and have been unremittingly hostile to the suburban enclaves that are its characteristic habitat. Well aware of this bias, and of the damage it has done to our actual knowledge of the American middle class, Wolfe has sought to listen to his subjects as carefully and objectively as possible, and then to make sense of what they have said.

WHAT HE has heard has convinced him of two main propositions. First, the American middle class is not in imminent danger of eroding or breaking up into its various con-

WILFRED M. MCCLAY, *an associate professor of history at Tulane University, is spending the 1997-98 academic year as a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.*

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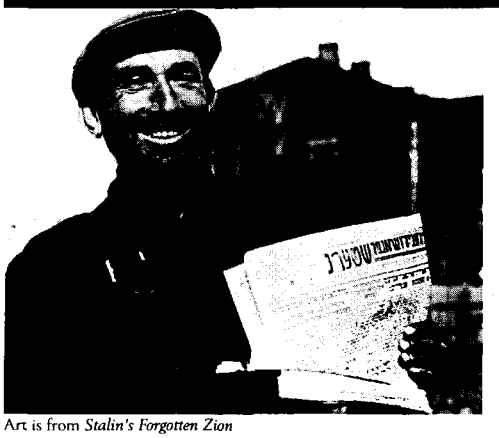

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stituent parts on account of multicultural tensions or wars over divergent values. We are, as Wolfe's title avers, still one nation, and that nation is still dominated by a reasonably homogeneous class. Second, however, the nature of middle-class unity has changed dramatically in recent decades. Contemporary America, Wolfe writes, has produced "a *new* middle-class morality," one that "bears little relationship to the way that term has been used in the past," whether by the indefatigable critics on the Left or, lately, by conservative intellectuals who have sought a moral bulwark in the putative solidity and traditionalism of middle-class values.

To see what Wolfe's "new middle-class morality" consists of, let us look at a few representative areas, beginning with religion. Appearances notwithstanding, Wolfe concludes, there is no large-scale revival taking place among middle-class Americans. On the contrary, his interviewees, even many of those who claim to have strong Christian convictions, display a consistent aversion to the use of absolutes or exclusive truth-claims in describing their religious beliefs. Though some of them think the government has become too hostile to religion, they also feel that religion should not be permitted to guide public policy. Nor, on the whole, do they favor making a public display of their religious views, or permitting them to inform or interfere with the practical details of their individual lives. They believe in the Ten Suggestions, not the Ten Commandments.

Within the family, Wolfe finds, a kind of disheveled ambivalence reigns. Even if they are not comfortable with them, most Americans have absorbed the transformations wrought by the past three decades of social change. Neither traditionalists nor postmodernists, middle-class Americans are, rather, realists who accept the need to adjust to changing circumstances by inventing family forms that "work" for them. At the same time, though, they worry about the quality of their family life. While some invoke economic necessity to justify both parents working outside the home, others, including working women, are apprehensive over the effects of this arrangement on their children. Ironically, one of the most frequently expressed concerns is that the rising generation is being spoiled by material abundance—the same abundance produced by dual-income households where women "have to" work.

American nationalism and patriotism? These have not disappeared, but they too have changed, becoming more inclusive, more modest, and more wary. Attitudes toward immigration, according to Wolfe, are generally positive, unless the immigration in question is illegal. Similarly, middle-class Americans approve of a mild, "celebrate your heritage" brand of multiculturalism, so long as it makes no claims against, for example, the hegemony of the English language, and so long as it does not have the effect of dividing or Balkanizing the nation. But in the wake of Vietnam and other polarizing episodes, there has been a decrease in both pro- and anti-American rhetoric, and a convergence in what might be called a chastened center, one which affirms the nation but does so conditionally and rationally, without crusading zeal, and in full recognition of past and present faults.

THE CONNECTING themes of tentativeness and understatement in all these attitudes are well captured in a series of catch-phrases Wolfe has devised to characterize them: "quiet faith," "modest virtues," "mature patriotism," "ordinary duties," and "morality writ small." The American middle class is pragmatic and conflict-averse. Its members are turned off by the bloviating and pretentious moral rhetoric of politicians and public spokesmen. They distrust the manipulative intentions behind such rhetoric, and fear the divisiveness that can be engendered by appeals to morality writ large. Instead, they have assembled a *bricolage* morality, pulled together in idiosyncratic fashion out of the pieces of this or that tradition, always with a view toward utility. They seek a sensible morality, to go with their soft, sensible shoes.

Wolfe finds much to admire in this disposition, so at odds with the explosive public discourse of the day, or with *Crossfire*-like shouting matches on television between representatives of the cultural Left and Right. In contrast to that distorted view, Wolfe offers a portrait of rough moral consensus: one which resists the more extreme positions of the Left—including, most notably, the attempt to "mainstream" homosexuality—but also parts company with the Right's propensity for judgmentalism and rigidity. Future reforms, he urges, would do well to build upon the considerable virtues of this pragmatic consensus.

WHAT ARE we to say about all this? In many respects, what Wolfe has done is to refresh and update the enduring image of a practical-minded, generous, self-interested, "middling," and unheroic American people that was described so memorably by Alexis de Tocqueville, its first great observer. There is real value in being reminded of these enduring characteristics, particularly when so much social-scientific inquiry, imbued with the values of the cultural Left, has been intent on denigrating the middle class as a seedbed of social and psychological pathology. As was seen most recently in the truly astonishing negative reaction to Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom's well-documented claim that America has made massive and rapid progress in race relations, there is much that is untrustworthy in the intentions, and the reality-meters, of certain of our most vocal intellectuals. Middle-class Americans instinctively grasp

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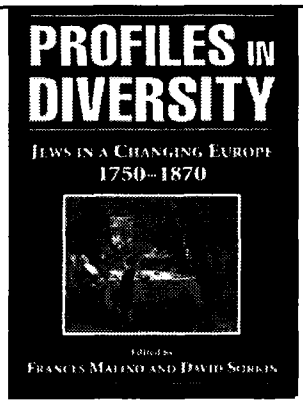

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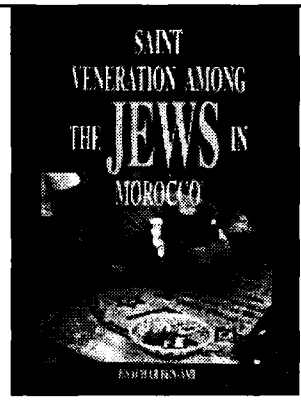

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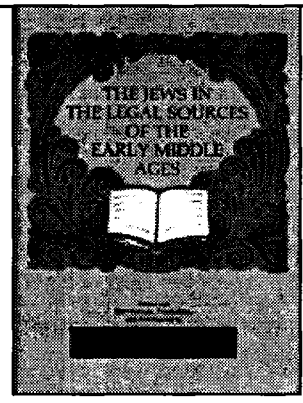

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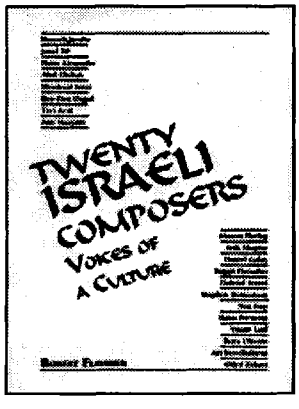

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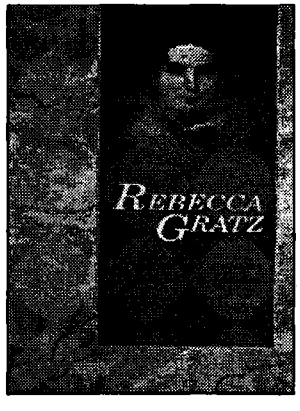

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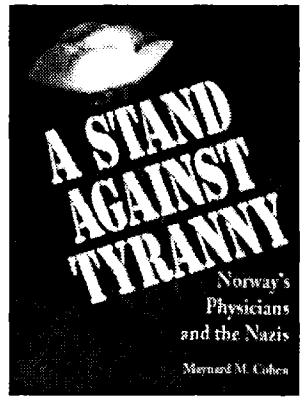

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the stake such people have in the perpetuation of grievance and disunity, and Wolfe appears to applaud their good sense.

Wolfe is probably also correct to point out that middle-class Americans are no less turned off by moralism from the Right. Still, the reader cannot help noticing that, in contrast with his treatment of the Left, Wolfe's criticisms of the Right are disproportionately harsh, and more often than not are expressed with a surprising lack of specificity, as if he felt no requirement to prove his case. Almost every statement in this book about "conservative intellectuals" seems to me demonstrably false, often taking the form of lazy and predictable throwaway lines. Consider the following passage, which has to be quoted at length to be appreciated:

> When conservative intellectuals write on moral matters, if Robert Bork is at all representative, they often do so in a tone so harsh in its judgment, so intemperately negative of the modern condition, so distrustful of ordinary human beings, so vehement in its insistence on one and only one truth, so ideological in its style of argumentation, and so seemingly unaware that even good morals can have bad consequences, that their message loses its resonance for real people in real-world situations. If that is what a belief in right and wrong entails, many middle-class Americans would conclude, then perhaps it is better to find another way of thinking about right and wrong.

Where does one begin with such a wild statement? And about whom, besides the grossly maligned Robert Bork, is Wolfe talking? James Q. Wilson? Gertrude Himmelfarb? William J. Bennett? Is their alleged "harshness" the match in any respect of that of, say, Catharine MacKinnon, Noam Chomsky, or Gore Vidal?

Conservatives have learned to overlook such slights, and indeed many have already done so in this case. (Wolfe's book carries an appreciative blurb by none other than William J. Bennett.) But there is another problem with *One Nation, After All*, or perhaps I should say with the phenomena it describes, that is not unrelated to Wolfe's distaste for strongly stated versions of "a belief in right and wrong."

ACCORDING TO repeated surveys, the American public seems determined (as of this writing) to disavow any connection between President Bill Clinton's ethical behavior in office, including not only sexual scandals but a steady pattern of other serious malfeasances, and its evaluation of his performance as President. Ever since this seeming contradiction became manifest, pundits have been trying to find something positive to say about it—for example, that it shows an America "growing up" and becoming more tolerant. At the very least, the public's reaction to the Clinton scandals would seem to show that, in one sense, Alan Wolfe is right: nonjudgmentalism is now the order of the day. Even the Reverend Billy Graham, symbol of American evangelical Protestantism, has cooperated, having forgiven the President for sins he not only has not confessed to but has resolutely denied committing.

Whatever Reverend Graham had in mind, what are we to make of the American people's seeming indifference to these matters? *Are* they now grown-ups, worthy of comparison at last with the French (those moral giants)? Does their attitude signal an abiding fair-mindedness, a determination to wait for all the evidence to come in? Or does it mean they are so fat and happy that they are unwilling to upset the status quo? Or—still another possibility—have we become a nation so compromised by our own individual moral failings that we no longer feel entitled to make judgments about the behavior of anyone else, lest we ourselves stand condemned?

This last question, as we are constantly reminded by our semi-educated punditocracy, restates a central proposition in Christian moral teaching. But that proposition has a very different meaning when it is grounded in a belief not in the Ten Suggestions but in a real moral order and in a God who has bequeathed us real commandments. To put this another way: there is a kind of moral liberality that may really be a form of cowardice, and a kind of tolerance that may really be a mask for self-protective indifference, of the kind signaled in that weary word of our day, "whatever . . . . " Just so, there is a kind of agreeableness that can be a mask for cynicism or loss of conviction; a kind of sentimental openness, or inclusiveness, that may mask a contempt for truth; and a kind of eclecticism that masks the inability to make hard choices.

All these moral possibilities are no less inherent in the portrait of middle-class America Wolfe has painted than is the live-and-let-live pragmatism he extols. This is hardly to deny the many good things that have derived from that pragmatism. The tolerance for cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity that has become a defining feature of contemporary American life is a particularly admirable development. And without a doubt, modest virtues are genuine virtues. But as Wolfe himself acknowledges, they are not enough.

The real testing time, in any case, will occur not in the fat and happy years but in the hard times that sooner or later lie ahead of us. Such times will require leaders willing to challenge, and citizens willing to be challenged. Whether either will be on display when they are needed is anyone's guess.

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Bad News

Spin Cycle:
Inside the Clinton
Propaganda Machine
by Howard Kurtz
Free Press. 324 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Terry Eastland

Howard Kurtz is a reporter who covers the doings of other reporters for the *Washington Post*. *Spin Cycle*, his book about how the Clinton White House handles the media, was initially scheduled for publication in early summer. But then Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky, and a parade of others made their appearance on the political stage. *Spin Cycle* was rushed to press, with just enough time for Kurtz to tweak the introduction and toss in an epilogue about the widening imbroglio. The rest of the book—a chronicle of the daily interaction between the White House and the Washington press corps in the now-tame-looking pre-Monica era—was left unchanged.

As it turns out, advancing the book's publication date proved a shrewd decision, and *Spin Cycle* has become a best-seller. Though Kurtz adds nothing to what is known about happenings in the Oval Office, he does shed light on a subject that remains of considerable importance: the techniques used by the Clinton administration to shape the way it is portrayed in the press.

Kurtz begins his narrative soon after the 1996 presidential election. The tale he tells—based on exclusive access to White House media-planning sessions and interviews with Clinton aides and key journalists—is one of constant struggle. The operatives who staffed the White House press office had an agenda; it was to push "positive" stories about serious issues, like Clinton's effort to balance the budget or expand NATO or fight teenage smoking. They wanted to package Clinton as a "progressive Democratic President" who was successfully rewriting "the book on the uses of government." And the journalists covering the White House had a countervailing agenda; increasingly distrustful of the scandal-dogged President, they wanted to focus on "the malfeasance and misfeasance and plain old embarrassments that had seemed to envelop the administration from the very start."

To prevail in this struggle, the White House media handlers, led by press secretary Michael McCurry, were constantly engaged in the multifaceted art of spin. One finely honed procedure, as Kurtz tells it, was to leak a newsworthy detail to a newspaper late in the afternoon, knowing that other news organizations would then have to play catch-up the following day; a story could then be kept alive through a series of 24-hour news cycles. Another time-tested approach was to court and coax and spoon-feed sympathetic reporters and columnists. This often worked: "I could feel the wool [concerning Clinton's race-relations initiative] being pulled over my eyes. And it felt good," a fellow scribe for the *Washington Post* told Kurtz.

When not attempting to plant good news, the Clinton press operation was kept particularly busy deflecting bad news—stories involving sleazy fund-raising, the sprawling Whitewater investigation, and the Paula Jones case. Thus, McCurry and company scrambled to keep sordid stories from spreading from the tabloids into the mainstream media. They bullied investigative reporters, attacking their motives and haranguing their editors. With the aim of gaining credibility for the longer haul, they practiced something we might call near-candor, confiding to reporters, off the record, that some things on

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Terry Eastland, *until recently the editor of* Forbes MediaCritic, *is now publisher of the* American Spectator.

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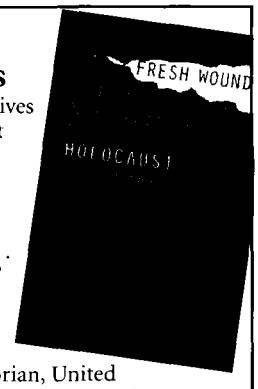

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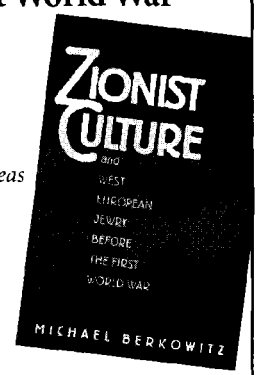

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some occasions might have gone awry. They released information in "reluctant dribs and drabs," in the hope that these would not reach critical mass.

They also flatly lied. As Kurtz reminds us, McCurry and his aides insisted that the White House "coffees" were not fund-raisers,

> even though White House aides referred to them in memos as fund-raisers, even though some of the finance people used them to coax big contributions, even though Clinton knew this was being done, because the guests were hit up for dough before and after the coffees but not while sipping the stuff.

How well have the "spin doctors" done? For the year that forms the heart of *Spin Cycle*, Kurtz gives the White House the edge: "McCurry and company didn't quite conquer the press, but they had clearly neutralized their media antagonists . . . and managed to convey Clinton's message, however muted, to a skeptical public." In the Monica Lewinsky era, however, as Kurtz notes in his epilogue, the tables have begun to turn. "One could see, at long last, the limits of spin." Though the unfolding scandal may not force Clinton from office, Kurtz's judgment is that "the damage to his presidency [will] never be repaired."

AS FAR as it goes, *Spin Cycle* is a savvy account of an ignoble story. But it only goes so far. It never seriously takes up the issue that seems to lie at its core: why the press failed to prepare the public for what Kurtz rightly calls the "tabloid presidency" or, indeed, for the revelations that today so dominate the news. The fact is that during the 1996 campaign, most major news organizations did not treat Clinton's growing ethical problems in any comprehensive way; in particular, the media opted to pass on the Paula Jones case. This lapse may be explained in part by the success of the spin-control methods Kurtz describes. But there must be deeper explanations as well. The story of how the "most ethical administration in history"—Bill Clinton's words—became one of the most scandal-ridden administrations in history, and until recently got a relatively free ride from the press, still awaits its chronicler.

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The Widower

Birthday Letters
by Ted Hughes
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 198 pp. $20.00

Reviewed by
Marc Berley

THE LATEST book of poems by Ted Hughes arrives with a high degree of trans-Atlantic fanfare, but not on account of its author's stature as England's poet laureate. *Birthday Letters* breaks Hughes's long silence about his former wife, Sylvia Plath, and their torrid life together as lovers and fellow poets. Married in 1956, they had two children and separated in 1962 (Hughes was unfaithful). All but two of the poems in this book, which were written over the last 25 years, are addressed to Plath, who in 1963, at the age of thirty, committed suicide by putting her head in an oven.

Plath and Hughes met at a party when she was a Fulbright scholar at Cambridge. Three months later, they were married. She was a New England beauty with a fierce ambition to make herself a writer. He was a young man from Yorkshire, a "big, dark, hunky boy," as Plath put it in her journal, who knew "all about the habits of animals." Already a poet, Hughes would become her mentor. "He has a health and hugeness," Plath wrote to her mother; "the more poems he writes, the more poems he writes." Then as now—he has published more than twenty books—Hughes's strength as a poet was his brutal treatment of brutal nature. He was earth to Plath's incipient fire.

Before her death, Plath had published one collection of poems, *The Colossus*. *The Bell Jar*, an autobiographical novel about a young woman who attempts suicide (as Plath had done in 1953), appeared in England under a pseudonym the month before she died. But her reputation soared with *Ariel* (1965), a posthumously published collection of poetry that had been composed in the last years of her life, and with violent, prolific intensity in her final months, after the break-up of her marriage. ("The muse has come to live here, now Ted has gone," Plath wrote to her mother.) In now-famous poems such as "Daddy," "Fever 103°," and "Lady Lazarus," focusing on death, motherhood, her husband, and the father who had died when she was eight and haunted her the rest of

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her life, Plath unleashed a coruscating, self-lacerating hatred. Robert Lowell, who described Plath's last work as an "irresistible blaze," also concluded soberly about these poems: "they tell that life, even when disciplined, is simply not worth it."

The story of Plath's short "blaze" has occasioned much vexation among biographical and literary investigators, in part because Hughes, Plath's literary executor, destroyed one of her three journals—to protect the children, he said—and lost (he said) another. Up until now, moreover, although he has collected, annotated, and written brief introductions for much of Plath's writings, he has been silent about her and his life with her. As for critical opinion, that has all along been of two camps: one (composed mainly of Plath cultists and feminists) out to get him as a faithless cad and to promote her as a major talent and a sweet and mistreated (if intensely emotional) woman; another (led by Hughes's sister Olwyn) out to get her as truculent and abusive and to promote him as a nurturing martyr.

So what is at stake in *Birthday Letters* is reputation: his and hers, private, public, and literary. Reviewers have already probed the book for answers to the old questions, and have lined up pretty much according to established dichotomies. But precisely because Hughes's silence has ended not with a tell-all memoir but with a book of poems, *Birthday Letters* also asks to be judged by other criteria than "he said, she said."

The poems—88 in all—begin at the beginning and take us through to Plath's gruesome end. There are good lines in some of them, but readers hungry for great verse are as likely to be disappointed as those eager for new facts. The poems are perhaps most interesting for what they reveal not about Plath but about Hughes.

"Bodily decrepitude is wisdom; young/ We loved each other and were ignorant," wrote W.B. Yeats. Hughes echoes these lines in "Fulbright Scholars," the first poem of *Birthday Letters*: "At twenty-five I was dumbfounded afresh/ By my ignorance of the simplest things." But in this poem, as in the collection as a whole, what looks like self-examination often turns out to be more like self-adulation. Hughes's raffishness—"No doubt I scanned particularly/ The girls. Maybe I noticed you"—has a way of compromising what it intends to humanize. Portraying himself as the puppy-nurse, Hughes does not, it is true, inadvertently show us the faithless jailer whom Plath denounced; but he does in some measure expose him.

The middle of the volume is a stretch of unspectacular poems with another failing: they turn grand moments into flat and wholly private experiences whose meaning is often impenetrable. In "Epiphany," for example, a fox cub elicits an inchoate half-thought about marriage:

> If I had grasped that whatever comes with a fox
> Is what tests a marriage and proves it a marriage—
> I would not have failed the test. Would you have failed it?
> But I failed. Our marriage had failed.

The "epiphany" here is insufficient, not because the reader may be in search of prurient facts but because Hughes has failed first to tangle, then to untangle, the emotional knots. By keeping an eerie distance from both Plath's suffering and his own, he has succeeded only in making many of the experiences he relates unreal.

There are exceptions. One of them occurs in "Robbing Myself," a poem that with candor, immediacy, and lyricism shows Hughes creeping naively through his doomed marriage as through a "house made newly precious to me":

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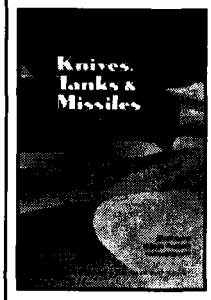

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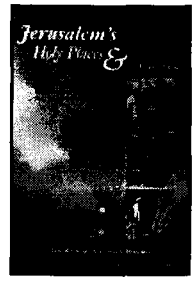

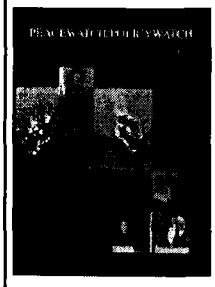

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I peered awhile, as through the keyhole,
Into my darkened, hushed, safe casket
From which (I did not know)
I had already lost the treasure.

On the whole, however, *Birthday Letters* is a failure. Both individually and as a collection, the poems are at once excessively narrative and excessively allusive, full of repetition, generality, and an enervating vagueness. There are too many banal metaphors, too many rambling descriptions of events into which Hughes cannot infuse the sense of decisiveness and permanence they clearly hold for him. The intensity of his purpose affects the quality of his writing for the worse, and one tires of the iterated plot: Plath was fated to die; her father (whom she notoriously likened to a Nazi "with a Meinkampf look") killed her; Hughes has been wrongly blamed.

These are, in short, egotistical poems that lack the power of a truly unshakable ego. Instead of providing answers of any kind, they only make the drama more opaque, and less interesting. Unlike *Ariel*, *Birthday Letters* does not even lead us to ask whether the suffering was worth it.

Corporate Guru

The World According to Peter Drucker
by Jack Beatty
Free Press. 204 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Leslie Lenkowsky

FOR ALL its astonishing economic success, the modern corporation remains an institution more often criticized than celebrated. Movies and television routinely cast it as a villain; journalists catalogue its depredations; academics implicate it in the disintegration of family life and/or the inner city; and politicians eye it suspiciously when it grows too large.

Yet the corporation also has its admirers, and none more influential than Peter Drucker. The author of 29 books and countless articles, Drucker is almost universally regarded as the foremost thinker on corporate management, a field that many of his followers credit him with having invented. Now approaching his ninetieth year, he has received a splendid birthday gift in *The World According to Peter Drucker* by Jack Beatty, a senior editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*. In this concise and generally sympathetic overview, Drucker emerges not just as an innovative adviser on everything from balance sheets to marketing strategies but as a sophisticated, if ultimately over-anxious, defender of a much-maligned entity.

DRUCKER HAS always seemed an exceedingly improbable big-business guru. Educated in the European tradition before fleeing from the growing Nazi presence in the Austria of his youth, he ranges easily over such subjects as Japanese art, the philosophy of Kierkegaard, and the history of British rule in India. His prose is stylish, direct, and refreshingly jargon-free. For all his fame in corporate America, he has never really been a part of it, opting instead for the life of a professor.

But what most distinguishes Drucker is the wider perspective in which his ideas about the practice of business are rooted. As early as his first book, *The End of Economic Man* (1939), Drucker raised doubts about the viability of classical market economies. Echoing the economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950), he argued that capitalism does well in achieving material progress but poorly in distributing its fruits. This failure "to establish equality by economic freedom," he wrote, could eventually destroy "belief in capitalism as a social system." For Drucker, fascism was an attempt to attain through political will what the market system itself could not deliver, resulting not only in economic chaos but much, much worse.

As Beatty shows, Drucker's fascination with corporations—and the people who run them—arose from his desire to find a solution to this tragic failing. In the large business firm, he saw an organization that could socialize the market, spreading wealth and ensuring a degree of stability for workers. Properly understood, then, the job of the corporate executive was not just to run a productive enterprise but, more grandly, to save civilization from a reprise of the despair and violence of the 1930's.

Drucker presented the practical side of his project in *The Concept of the Corporation* (1945), the work that first established his reputation. Though focused on the workings of General Motors and how to improve the company's bottom line, the book, Beatty observes, also laid out Drucker's vision for the industrial society of the postwar world. His primary concern was to make the case for measuring corporate success not only by profitability but by "noneconomic criteria" as well. To ensure that GM's employees did not feel like Chaplinesque robots on a production line, he urged the company to adopt a series of quite radical policies, including worker participation in factory governance, a corporate pension plan, and a "guaranteed annual wage" to cushion the impact of periodic layoffs.

To Drucker's dismay, the leaders of GM showed little interest in the heroic social role he envisioned for them. Alfred P. Sloan, the company's legendary chairman, was so unhappy with the book's portrayal of GM that he wrote his own account, *My Years With General Motors*, which itself became a business clas-

LESLIE LENKOWSKY *is professor of philanthropic studies and public policy at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.*

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JEWISH STUDIES

transaction

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S. Ilan Troen, editor

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sic. Even Walter Reuther, the head of the United Automobile Workers, dismissed Drucker's ideas about factory governance, curtly declaring that "managers should manage and workers work."

But Drucker's advice did not go unheeded elsewhere. The Japanese took it to heart, creating corporations whose extraordinary success has been due in no small part to a concerted effort to build solidarity with workers. In the U.S., the rapidly expanding field of management education came to embrace Drucker's views on employee relations and the responsibilities of top executives; today, even the most profit-driven businesses wish to be seen as "good corporate citizens." General Motors eventually came around as well, incorporating Drucker's no longer quite so controversial notions into the operations of its much-admired Saturn plant in Tennessee.

To judge by his more recent work, however, Drucker now doubts that such changes go far enough. In response to globalization, he has lately called for the international regulation of wages to prevent American workers from losing their jobs to cheap competition. Disappointed with the performance of corporate managers, he has also turned his attention to nonprofit organizations in the hope that they might be a new instrument for building social cohesion. Indeed, so pessimistic has Drucker become that he has condemned the wave of hostile takeovers that began in the 1980's as "the final failure of corporate capitalism" to control itself.

JACK BEATTY ranges over all these issues and more in an analytical biography that nimbly explicates and assesses Drucker's contributions and thought. Beatty's own approving take is that Drucker is first and foremost a "moralist" who, by examining not the flow of money but the values, relationships, and quality of economic life, has "take[n] the capital out of capitalism." Perhaps for that reason, Beatty tends to become alarmed whenever Drucker seems too partial to the capital *in* capitalism, as in his call for the "reprivatization" of government services. At the same time, Beatty not unexpectedly endorses Drucker's recent expressions of pessimism about corporate capitalism.

But what are we to make of that pessimism? Given Drucker's track record, his views deserve a serious hearing. Still, it is difficult not to consider them an overreaction, colored perhaps by his own encounter as a young man with the fateful consequences of economic collapse.

Things look rather different today, when the anti-capitalist response to capitalism's "creative destruction" (in Joseph Schumpeter's term) appears to have utterly petered out. Despite the rigors of foreign competition and corporate restructuring, and in the face of studies purporting to show rising inequalities in income, traditional champions of the working class like Democrats in the U.S. and Laborites in Britain sound increasingly like classical 19th-century liberals (even if they do not always act accordingly). In Asia, too, the present economic crisis, for all its seriousness, has bolstered rather than weakened the forces of both political and economic democracy.

It would seem that modern capitalism has won a far greater degree of popular support than even its friends have supposed. In exchange for a rising standard of living, the public appears willing to tolerate the high corporate salaries, plant closings, downsizings, and other phenomena that so dismay critics. Although the day may yet come when popular opinion turns on the corporation, for now, the productive if morally imperfect industrial giants that Peter Drucker has done so much to explicate, and whose practices he has done so much to refine, continue to prove extraordinarily capable of providing the things that ordinary people want.

Isolationism, Inc.

The Great Betrayal: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global Economy
by Patrick J. Buchanan
Little Brown. 384 pp. $22.95

Reviewed by
Arch Puddington

SINCE HIS first campaign for the presidency in 1992, Patrick J. Buchanan has emerged as this country's most forceful and unapologetic advocate of isolationism. This stance has gained him a small but enthusiastic following that transcends traditional party lines, with supporters ranging from blue-collar Democrats in the rust belt to partisans of the nativist Right.

So far, Buchanan's political agenda has not proved a winner at the polls. Undaunted by past failure, however, he appears, Harold Stassen-like, to be preparing for yet another presidential bid. If this book is his campaign manifesto, we can expect a hard-edged and often strident crusade.

The Great Betrayal sounds many of the same themes that Buchanan has emphasized over the years in his newspaper columns and television appearances, as well as on the stump: the need to curtail immigration and to reduce foreign aid, and the perils of U.S. overextension abroad. At its heart, however, is the issue of international trade—in Buchanan's conception, a form of warfare in which one side, and one side only, can emerge victorious, while all others lose. Over the past several decades, in his judgment, the U.S., having failed to engage in commercial combat, has been the loser.

In leveling this charge, Buchanan

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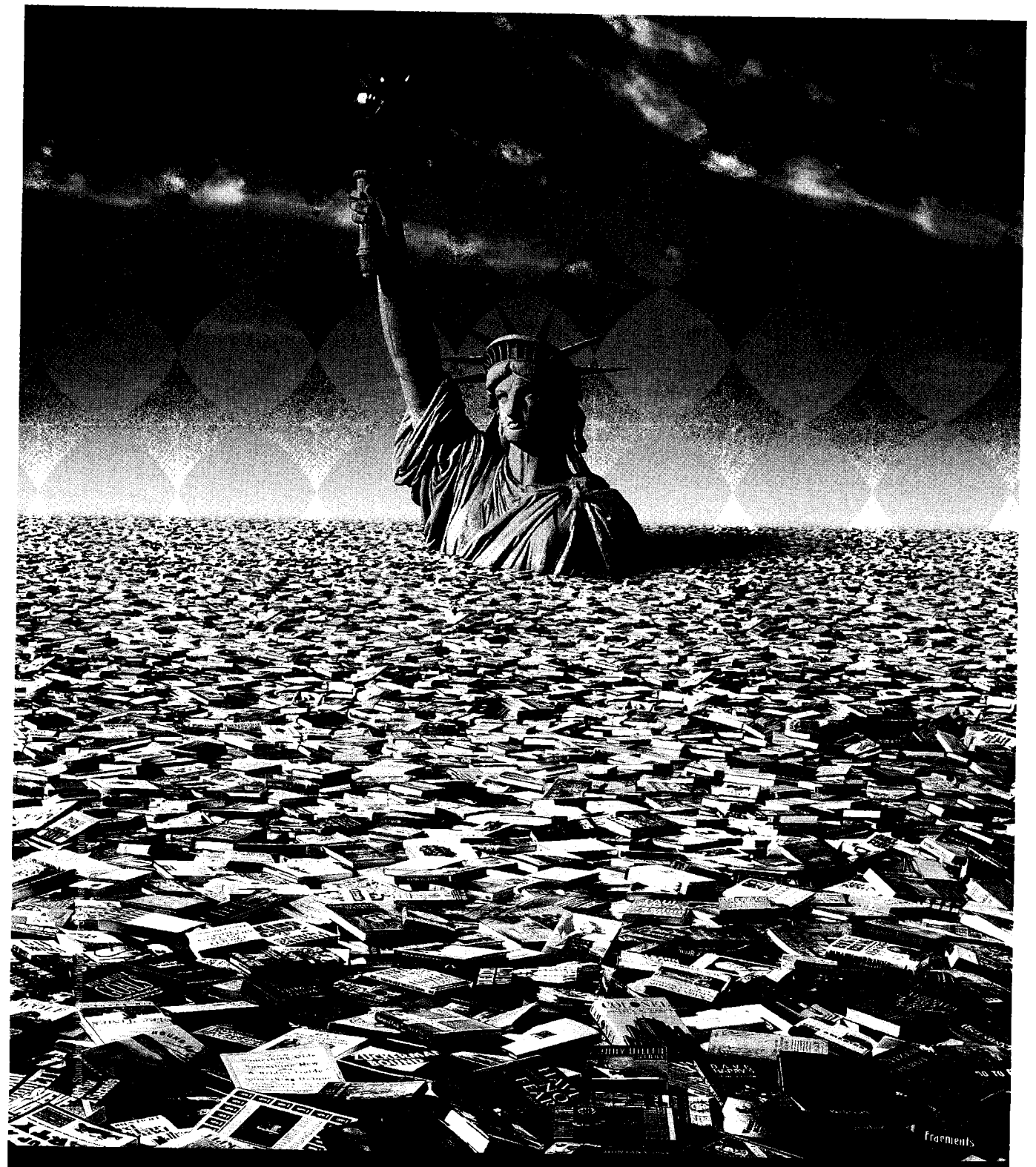

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denounces just about every trade measure adopted by the U.S. in the postwar era, reserving his most concentrated fire for recent accords like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). America, in his view, has played by the rules while our major trading partners, most notably Japan, have not, keeping out American goods even while they underhandedly destroy export-oriented industries in the U.S.

The result, Buchanan asserts, has been an accelerating flight of jobs abroad, a decline in the living standards of those industrial workers fortunate enough to remain employed, the impoverishment of blue-collar America, and the enrichment of a new class of lawyers, consultants, bankers, journalists, and other do-nothings.

Ultimately, Buchanan sees U.S. trade policy as the culprit behind the decline of the family, an upsurge in male idleness, and rising crime rates. Free trade, he writes acidly, has reduced America from a great nation to a "colony of the world."

Buchanan's cure for the terrible sickness he diagnoses is plain enough. In *The Great Betrayal* he repeats his call for strict curbs on legal and illegal immigration, and, under the slogan "no more Vietnams, no more Koreas," he calls for terminating foreign aid, bringing our troops home from Europe, and withdrawing from almost all our diplomatic and military commitments overseas.

When it comes to trade, Buchanan makes a sustained argument for protectionism. American economic greatness, he insists, has always rested on protectionist walls. Therefore, only a system of stiff tariffs, aimed at keeping products made by low-wage workers out of the country, can usher us into a better future. But that future, he assures his readers, can be very bright indeed: nothing less than a new industrial age, complete with full employment, steadily increasing wages, and a more equal distribution of wealth.

THAT BUCHANAN'S ideas are problematic is putting things mildly. There is, for one thing, the unmistakable whiff of conspiracy-mongering in his analyses. His account of the global economic order is stocked with pointed references to such nemeses of the hard Right as "one-worlders," the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Trilateral Commission. Today's system of world trade, Buchanan darkly reminds us, was shaped by postwar international negotiations that featured the participation of two American diplomats who betrayed their country, Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss. Similar hints and winks to the initiated abound.

Even where Buchanan appears more reasoned, his arguments never quite ascend to reasonableness. Deeply resentful of the economic achievements of Germany and Japan in the decades following World War II, he refuses to acknowledge that both the American economy and the American worker benefited from German and Japanese success, as they did from European and Asian prosperity. In explaining the decline of blue-collar jobs in the U.S., he gives no consideration to factors other than trade—technological progress, for example—nor does he credit the many *new* jobs created by such developments.

Finally, Buchanan seems blind to the fact that countries (including most notably Japan) that have followed the course he advocates for the U.S., resisting participation in the liberalized global marketplace, have recently been suffering stagflation, high unemployment, and slow economic growth, while the U.S., blandly indifferent to his advice, has prospered. All in all, Buchanan's promise that tariffs are the key to a golden economic age is tantamount to consumer fraud.

IF THE proposals advanced in *The Great Betrayal* are worthless as economic strategy, how are they likely to fare in the realm of politics?

At first blush, one might be tempted to dismiss their clout. In the years since his last electoral setback, Buchanan's emphasis on naked class warfare and his ever more strenuous populism have increasingly alienated him from the Republican-party mainstream. Nor would there seem to be much support for his position in the country at large, if only because the American economy is in so much healthier a state than it was in either 1992 or 1996, years when Buchanan failed to garner even 20 percent of the Republican primary vote.

Yet Buchanan's brand of isolationism and protectionism could still come to exert an appeal. Many Americans are legitimately disturbed when asked to spend billions to stabilize the tattered economies of Asian countries whose leaders openly sneer at Western-style democracy. They may also wonder about the wisdom of free-trade agreements with Latin American countries whose level of economic development is much lower than our own. And they may with reason be unsettled by America's partial surrender of economic sovereignty to global entities like the World Trade Organization.

These sentiments are well understood not only by Buchanan but by politicians who stand distant from him on the political spectrum—Richard Gephardt, the liberal Democratic House minority leader, being the most salient example. In the absence of a strong political leadership capable of making a clear and convincing case for international engagement, the simplistic and illogical arguments advanced in *The Great Betrayal* may yet make some headway for the isolationist cause.

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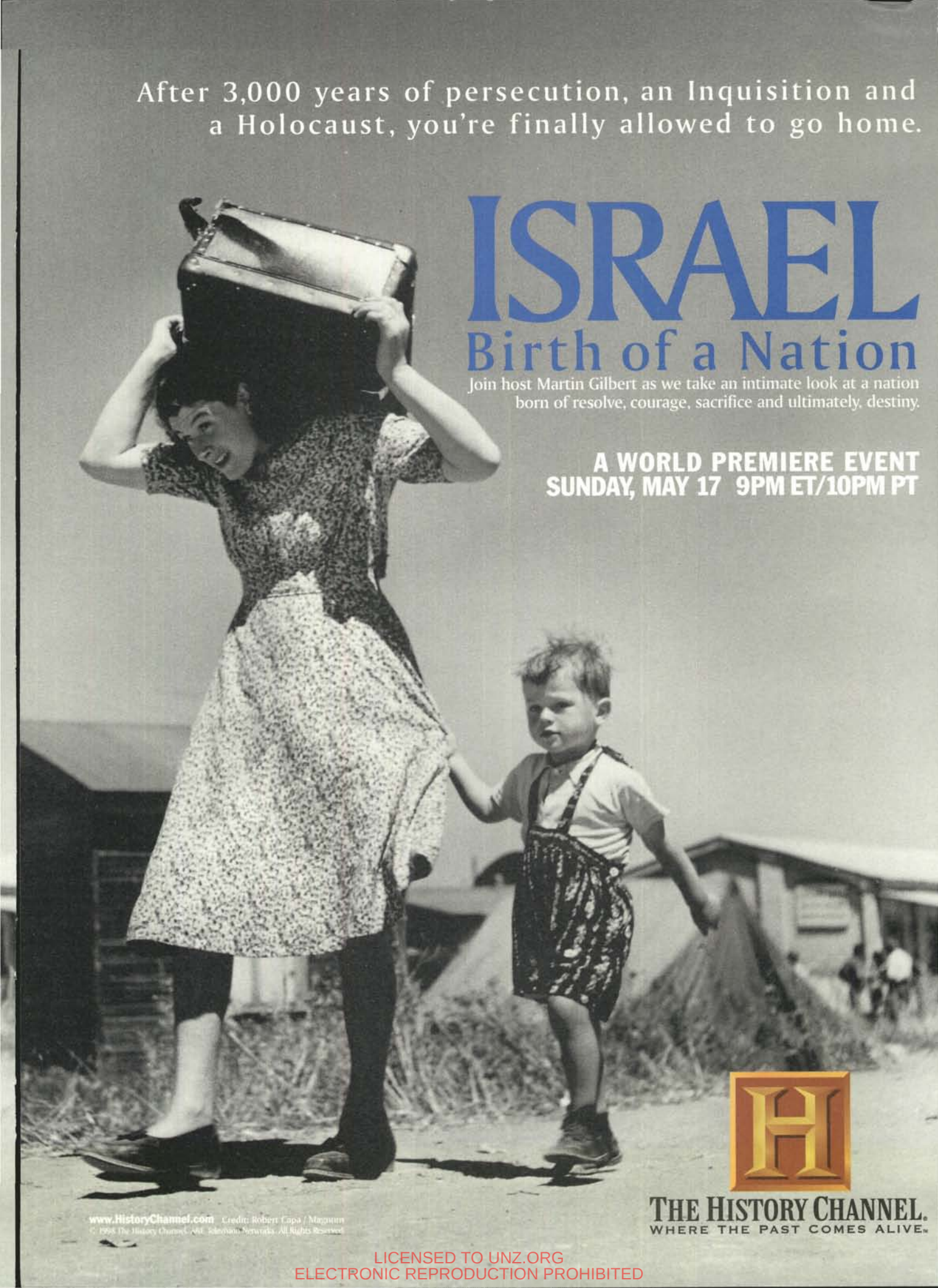
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